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First Committee
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Wednesday, 22 October 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Sareva ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 62 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: This morning the Committee will continue with the second phase of its work, namely, the thematic discussion on item subjects, as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament-related and international security agenda items.

Delegations are today invited to make statements on conventional weapons, as well as to introduce draft resolutions. As I indicated yesterday, if we have time available, I will also invite delegations to make statements and introduce draft resolutions on items pertaining to the subject areas originally intended for tomorrow.

Mr. Caughley (New Zealand): In New Zealand's capacity as Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, I have the honour to address the First Committee on behalf of Pacific Islands Forum members represented at the United Nations, namely, Australia, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, New Zealand.

The Pacific region, despite its mostly peaceful history, is not immune to the security challenges of the twenty-first century. Pacific Island countries recognize the effectiveness of working collaboratively to address global and regional security challenges. At the 2000 Pacific Islands Forum Meeting, members agreed to the Biketawa Declaration, which provides an overarching mechanism for Forum Countries to discuss and address regional security issues in a cooperative, consultative manner.

In the past year, the Pacific Islands Forum has tackled head-on the challenges posed by international terrorism and the spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons in the region. Pacific Island countries developed a regional framework — the Nasonini Declaration — to address the problem of global terrorism. In August of this year, leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum endorsed the speedy passage of model legislation to advance counter-terrorism under that process.

Similarly, Pacific island countries have adopted a regional approach to combating the spread of small arms. Recent studies have outlined the significant social and economic costs of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in small Pacific island communities. Those studies have identified disparities in controls and penalties and permissive attitudes to the ownership and management of small arms, which create loopholes that have been exploited by arms traffickers to gain access to the region. While we have achieved progress in some

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areas, improving national legislation and regional coordination in customs controls, law enforcement and armoury management will be essential to combat unscrupulous arms traders and other opportunists.

Effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a key priority for the Pacific region. We have implemented the Programme of Action in many ways: by developing a common regional approach to weapon control, reflected in a document called the Nadi Framework; and by holding a regional workshop, co-hosted by Japan and Australia in Tokyo in January 2003, to enhance cooperation in legal and institutional areas, law enforcement and effective stockpile management. We have also implemented the Programme of Action by participating actively in the regional segment of the Biennial Meeting of States on the Implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, which was held in New York in July of this year, as well as through this year's endorsement by Pacific Islands Forum leaders of model weapons-control legislation based on the Nadi Framework. Leaders have encouraged Forum members to adopt the model weapons-control legislation to the fullest extent possible, while taking into account different domestic situations.

The region has an ongoing commitment to addressing the small arms threat. To solidify the progress made at two earlier workshops, the Governments of Australia, Japan and New Zealand, and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific are currently considering a proposal to hold a further regional meeting to promote implementation of the draft weapons-control bill. Forum members wish to thank the Japanese Government for its generous ongoing support for the region's efforts to tackle the small arms challenge.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the police and military support Pacific island countries have extended to Solomon Islands, at the invitation of its Government and consistent with the principles of collective security, to overcome instability and lawlessness caused in part by the spread of small arms. That effort has seen the return of over 75 per cent of the high-powered military weapons removed earlier from the Royal Solomon Islands Police armoury.

The past decade has presented Pacific Islands Forum members with security threats not seen before. Our history of friendly relations gives us an advantage. Pacific Islands Forum members will continue to address security challenges through shared commitment and pragmatic, solutions-oriented approaches.

The Chairman: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.1.

Ms. Notutela (South Africa): It is a pleasure for my delegation to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.1 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, on behalf of Colombia and Japan.

The draft resolution builds upon resolution 57/72 of 22 November 2002 and incorporates important updates and decisions as mandated by, among others, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The first Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action was recently held, in accordance with the Programme of Action. Furthermore, a decision on the date and venue of the United Nations conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action needs to be taken at this session of the General Assembly.

In that regard, the draft resolution addresses the positive outcome of the Biennial Meeting of States, which was ably chaired by Ambassador Inoguchi of Japan. Recognition is also given to the importance of national reports submitted by Member States on the implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as to regional efforts in support of the Programme of Action.

The draft resolution also addresses the successful conclusion — as a result of the skilful chairpersonship of Ambassador Rakesh Sood of India — of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. In accordance with the Programme of Action and the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons, the draft resolution proposes that a decision be taken regarding the convening in New York of a

United Nations conference to review the implementation of the Programme of Action in 2006. The draft resolution also stipulates that the conference should be preceded by a preparatory committee meeting, to be held in New York from 9 to 12 January 2006. Furthermore, if necessary, a subsequent preparatory session may be held.

The draft resolution also proposes that a decision be taken on the establishment of an open-ended working group to enable States to negotiate an international instrument to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons; and that the working group should hold an organizational session in New York from 3 to 4 February 2004, in order to set the dates for its subsequent sessions.

The date and duration of the proposed review conference to review the implementation of the Programme of Action follows the same pattern established for the 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, for which the second preparatory committee meeting was held in early January 2001, and the Conference itself in July 2001. That Conference needed an intensive preparatory phase, of three meetings lasting five weeks in duration, owing to the fact that procedural issues needed to be finalized and the final document had to be developed. It is then expected that, for the review conference to be held in 2006, procedural issues will likely be based on those agreed to for the 2001 Conference. The 2006 review conference will be reviewing the existing Programme of Action. In addition, two biennial meetings would precede the 2006 review conference. It is therefore anticipated that an intensive preparatory phase similar to that followed for the 2001 Conference will not be necessary.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts, the decision proposed in the resolution to establish an open-ended working group to negotiate an international tracing instrument is qualified by three elements, namely, that the character of the international instrument will be determined in the course of the negotiations; that the international instrument should be complementary to, and not inconsistent with, States' existing commitments under relevant international instruments; and that, finally, the international instrument should take into account States' national security and legal interests.

Another element that has been further developed is the issue of brokering. The outcome of the first Biennial Meeting pointed to the importance of that issue. For the past two years, Member States have been requested to provide their views on how to deal with illicit brokering activities. Against that background, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to hold broad-based consultations on the issue of illicit brokering and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the outcome of those consultations. The purpose of that development is to provide more in-depth information on this issue in order to facilitate consideration of the matter by Member States at an appropriate time.

The draft resolution is therefore action-oriented and attempts to encapsulate the priorities of the international agenda on small arms through 2006. As in the past, we hope that the draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): I have asked for the floor to support the draft resolution on small arms and light weapons contained in document A/C.1/58/L.1, which has just been introduced by the representative of South Africa on behalf of over 70 sponsors.

Japan introduced a draft resolution on small arms for the first time in 1995. Since then, the international community's awareness of the problems related to small arms has grown remarkably. Many initiatives have been undertaken, and activities are being carried out at the international, regional and national levels to address the issue of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons. Japan welcomes such developments and is pleased to see that the United Nations has been actively engaged in confronting this issue.

In particular, the United Nations first Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was convened in July of this year, was an important milestone in this area. In my capacity as Chair of the Meeting, I would like, first of all, to express my deep gratitude to all the Member States, international and regional organizations and civil society participants that made substantial contributions to the successful outcome of the Meeting.

This year's draft resolution refers to the Biennial Meeting in welcoming not only the adoption by consensus of the Meeting's report but also the efforts made by Member States to submit approximately 100 national reports on the progress made in their implementation of the Programme of Action, which represents nearly a five-fold increase over the previous year.

Before going into more detail about the Meeting, I would like to briefly touch upon several noteworthy issues highlighted in the draft resolution.

I would first like to refer to the issue of tracing and marking. On the basis of the successful outcome of discussions held by the Group of Governmental Experts — which is reflected in the report (A/58/138) of the Secretary-General on the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner — we hope that an open-ended working group to negotiate an international instrument on that subject will be established. The commencement of negotiations on tracing and marking is the first, important follow-up step in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Secondly, I would like to refer to the decision to create a road map leading to a second United Nations conference on the subject — to be held in 2006 — and its preparatory process. The draft resolution would authorize the convening of the second United Nations conference on small arms and light weapons in New York during the months of June and July 2006, with the preparatory committee process to begin in January 2006. Japan will continue to fully support that process and hopes to ensure continued momentum for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action in anticipation of the second United Nations conference on the subject.

Thirdly, I wish to mention the issue of brokering. The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to hold broad-based consultations with all Member States, interested regional and subregional organizations, international agencies and experts in the field of brokering regarding further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons. Japan would like to encourage Member States to make every possible effort in that regard.

In my capacity as Chair of the first Biennial Meeting, I would like to take this opportunity to provide the First Committee with an overview of the main objectives and achievements of the Meeting.

As we all know, the primary objective of the Meeting was to provide an opportunity for States to share their experiences from the first two years of the implementation of the Programme of Action. But the Meeting went beyond that objective, in that it became a forum for strengthening existing partnerships and building new ones among States, international and regional organizations and civil society in the common struggle against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Representatives from a total of 99 Member States and one Observer State made statements regarding the status of their national implementation of the Programme of Action, and several regional and international organizations — including United Nations agencies — made statements concerning the global and regional implementation of the Programme of Action. Furthermore, the participation of the community of non-governmental organizations, both in the conference room where the Meeting was held and through many side events, reinforced the partnership between States and civil society.

The Meeting provided an excellent opportunity to assess both the progress that has been made and the obstacles that have confronted us in implementing the Programme of Action in the two years since it was adopted, thereby helping to enhance our collective sense of ownership and responsibility for the process we initiated in July 2001. It also offered States the opportunity to build momentum towards mustering both the political will and the professional competence needed to combat the problem. The Meeting also contributed to strengthening the partnerships for action established through a variety of international assistance and cooperation initiatives.

The Meeting clearly demonstrated that multilateralism matters and that we can make it work. The success of the Meeting reaffirmed the importance of multilateral cooperation and demonstrated to the international community that multilateralism in the area of small arms disarmament is indeed functioning well. We believe that the Meeting marked an important milestone in strengthening the concerted efforts of the international community aimed at reducing the number

of victims of small arms. It is my fervent wish that all States will make full use of every opportunity to reinforce their commitment to the Programme of Action, building on the results of the Meeting to take concrete steps to strengthen national, regional and global efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects in the lead-up to the second biennial meeting, to be held in 2005, and the second United Nations conference on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, to be held in 2006.

Finally, I would once again like to express our fervent wish that this draft resolution on small arms will be adopted without a vote and with as many sponsors as possible. I invite all delegations to come forward to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to support the representative of South Africa's introduction of the draft resolution (A/C.1/58/L.1) entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", which was made on behalf of South Africa, Japan, Colombia and many other countries.

The Government of Colombia would like to express its satisfaction at the fact that the draft resolution just introduced by the representative of South Africa has garnered a large number of sponsors once again this year. The support of delegations for the draft resolution reflects the determination of the international community — previously expressed through the adoption of the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects — to give this problem the consideration it deserves in the international agenda and to assume the responsibility to begin to resolve it.

Political support has continued to grow in order to address the issue of small arms and light weapons, and many efforts have been made at the local, national and regional levels. Given that the effects of the problem of small arms and light weapons vary throughout the world, the countless efforts being made at the national and regional levels are a reflection of the various approaches to different aspects of the problem.

The first Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was successfully held this year under the skilful chairpersonship of Japan's Ambassador in Geneva.

We must also acknowledge and encourage the invaluable work being carried out by non-governmental organizations to implement the Programme of Action. It is difficult to find a better example of cooperation between States and civil society in the United Nations than that which exists vis-à-vis small arms and light weapons.

Lastly, I would once again like to underscore the importance of maintaining the political momentum generated at the 2001 Conference in order to effectively address the problem of small arms and light weapons. That momentum is needed, given the figures provided by the *Small Arms Survey 2002* with regard to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which speak for themselves about the scope of the problem and its impact on international peace and security.

There are already 639 million small arms and light weapons in the world, 60 per cent of which — namely, 255 million — are illicit. Almost 4 million civilians were killed by such weapons in the 1990s, the large majority of them women and children. Tens of millions were also displaced in the same period — again, mostly women and children. Accordingly, the Secretary-General has rightly said that small arms and light weapons are truly weapons of mass destruction in today's world.

Therein lies the importance of the draft resolution introduced by South Africa on this subject. Progress made in that area has already been sufficiently pointed out. All that remains is for us is to invite Member States that have not yet done so to become sponsors of the draft resolution. We also invite them to make progress in fully implementing the measures adopted in the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels, as well as in the context of the international cooperation and assistance that may be required by States to implement those measures and in the follow-up to the Conference.

The Chairman: I now give the floor to the representative of Mali to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.51.

Mr. Cheibani (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Despite the progress made, curbing the proliferation of, and illicit trafficking in, small arms and light weapons continues to be a major concern. It is therefore

appropriate to congratulate all States that have put in place prevention mechanisms and legislative measures to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

It should be noted that, for its part, Mali has for many years made ongoing efforts to end the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which represents an obstacle to development efforts. Among its initiatives aimed at curbing the illicit proliferation of small arms and at collecting them, I would simply like to refer to the peace flame ceremony celebrated annually in Mali, which has spread to other regions by virtue of its success.

Since the holding of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, my country has continued its efforts in the area of micro-disarmament. For example, Mali has been fully engaged in the development of the framework convention on international arms transfers that will be launched at Bamako this month.

Beyond the very praiseworthy efforts that have been made at the national level, my country also believes that it is necessary to take the fight against the illicit proliferation and trafficking in small arms and light weapons to the regional and subregional levels. In that regard, on behalf of States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo — I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.51 under sub-item (l) of agenda item 73.

The preambular part of draft resolution, which is entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them" and which was also adopted by the First Committee last year, refers to the underlying reasons for the initiatives taken at the regional and subregional levels, as well as at the United Nations, in order to better address the problem of small arms. Given the scope of the problem and the ongoing threat to security posed by the illicit trade in small arms, illicit international transfers in such weapons constitutes both a danger to populations and a destabilizing factor for States. In that regard, it has become necessary to make efforts to expand cooperation in order to eradicate this scourge. The draft resolution being submitted for approval by the First Committee therefore employs the language of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

In its operative part, the draft resolution takes note of efforts undertaken in this regard at the regional and subregional level, as well as by the United Nations. The draft resolution also refers to the establishment of national commissions to curb the proliferation of small arms. It also recommends that civil society organizations also become involved in the process of countering the proliferation of these weapons.

Although the draft resolution has not been drastically altered since last year, it has been made more specific; for example, by mentioning the renewal of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa. In an effort to further harmonize the text as a whole, operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of last year's draft resolution have been inverted in this year's draft.

The member States of ECOWAS fully support all multilateral measures to put an end to the scourge of small arms and light weapons. We call on the international community to support the efforts of ECOWAS by enhancing cooperation and improving coordination in the overall effort to end the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. We welcome the cooperation on the part of the Secretariat and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and urge them to continue efforts to promote and support the various efforts in the West Africa subregion, particularly in supporting national commissions.

We also thank all States that have become sponsors of the draft resolution, in particular the countries of the European Union, as well as other important partners who have worked with us in drawing up the draft resolution, whose subject continues to be a major concern in the development of all our States. We also wish to thank the States that will become sponsors of the draft resolution.

In conclusion, as in previous years, we express the hope that the First Committee will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Udedibia (Nigeria): I am speaking on behalf of the African Group in this thematic discussion on conventional weapons.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons constitutes a major impediment to the peace, stability, security and economic development of many countries, especially in Africa. Those arms continue to have devastating effects on the African continent, considering their capacity to exacerbate and prolong conflicts. Millions of lives have been lost and serious humanitarian crises have been created in the region, as a result of the illicit use of such weapons. Over the past decade alone, the use of illicit small arms and light weapons has claimed more than 20 million victims in Africa, many of whom were civilians, women and children. An estimated 2 million children have been killed, 5 million people have been handicapped, 12 million have been left without shelter and as many as 17 million have either been displaced or rendered refugees. In Africa the ever-expanding illicit trade in small arms is thriving at the expense of the continent's young people. A whole generation of African children is being inducted into a culture of violence marked by violent death and injury.

It is for that reason that, in the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, African heads of State and Government expressed concern about the impact that the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons has on creating threats to peace and security in Africa and on undermining efforts to improve the standards of living of the African people. In addition, at the first ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, which was held in Durban, South Africa, on 8 July 2002, African heads of State and Government welcomed the Solemn Declaration of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, which was adopted in Lomé, Togo, in July 2000. The Declaration affirmed that the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons, as well as landmines, poses a threat to peace and security on the African continent. African leaders have always used every opportunity to reaffirm their political commitment to harmonize, pursue and strengthen their actions with regard to the issue of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking in small arms and light weapons, with a view to developing a comprehensive African response throughout the continent that is commensurate with their ambitions for Africa and for its peoples.

The death and destruction caused by illicit small arms and light weapons and the conflicts and instability generated and sustained through their use necessitate urgent and concerted action in implementing the Programme of Action of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The African Group reaffirms its commitment to the obligations undertaken in the Programme of Action and welcomes the outcome of the first Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place here in New York last July. It also looks forward with hope to the next Biennial Meeting, which is to be held in 2005, as well as to the review conference to be held in 2006.

The African Group notes with satisfaction that the Group of Experts set up by the Secretary-General to study the feasibility of developing an international instrument to identify and trace small arms and light weapons has successfully completed its work. The African Group invites Member States to utilize the excellent opportunity presented by this positive development to commence negotiations leading to a reasonable outcome that can help to curb the illicit trade in small arms.

At the national level, individual African countries have taken various measures towards the implementation of the Programme of Action, in recognition of the consequences of the illicit circulation of small arms in their territories. The same spirit has guided efforts at the regional and subregional levels. Those efforts, and many more, have been undertaken out of deep concern over the devastating effects that the illicit trade in small and light weapons has on peace, security, stability and sustainable development in Africa.

The African Group expresses regret that, despite all our efforts, little concrete achievement has been recorded in controlling the illicit proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons on the continent. In fact, Africa has witnessed the continued proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. In some cases, that has resulted in more problems associated with political instability and armed conflict. That unfortunate situation may not be due to a lack of effort or political will on the part of African States — either individually or acting in concert — but rather to the lack of means to meet the overwhelming challenge. As reported by the African Group at the Biennial

Meeting in July, the greatest difficulty encountered by African countries in this area is that of a lack of international cooperation, particularly from arms suppliers and manufacturers or their Governments who ensure the continued influx of illicit small arms into Africa.

The Programme of Action adopted important recommendations from the Organization of African Unity's 2000 Bamako Ministerial Declaration, but it fell short with regard to the Declaration's crucial aspect relating to illicit arms transfers to non-State actors. For Africa, one of the greatest difficulties in controlling the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the continent still remains the fact that those weapons are easily accessible to non-State actors. Africa's unrelenting call on the international community, and particularly on arms-producing and -supplying countries, to limit trade in small arms and light weapons to Governments and registered licensed traders has been largely ignored. That call is consistent with the one made by the Secretary-General on Member States to bring the trade in small arms and light weapons back under the control of States, with States being made accountable for their transfer. In that regard, the African Group wishes to note that the failure of the international community to hold arms manufacturers and their agents and brokers to account has also been largely responsible for the uncontrolled illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa, with its attendant consequences on the continent.

Experience has shown that one of the most effective strategies in dealing with the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is to control it from the source. Many African countries are ill equipped to counter the massive flow of illicit arms into their territories from manufacturers and suppliers, particularly in situations where there are willing partners in the form of rebel groups and other similar groups. Any sincere effort on the part of the international community to tackle the menace of illicit small arms should necessarily include provisions for the imposition of appropriate sanctions on arms manufacturers and suppliers whose products are found in illicit hands. The African Group believes that that would be an important and transparent way of helping to minimize the problem of armed conflict in Africa and elsewhere.

In that regard, any document agreed by Member States should contain provisions for tracing the flow of small arms and light weapons from its source, in order to identify points of diversion into illicit networks. That should necessarily include a provision for the appropriate marking of arms as an integral part of the production process. Connected to that is the need to introduce the use of authenticated end-user certificates as a means of monitoring the export and transfer of small arms and light weapons. The African Group believes that developing national, regional and international controls on export licensing and end-user certificates is a crucial element in ensuring that the trade remains under Government control and is not diverted into illicit markets or illicit end-users.

The African Group is deeply concerned that the illicit small arms trade has always obstructed the implementation of arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council. To date, there is no United Nations arms embargo that has not been violated. The African Group welcomes the recent establishment of independent panels of experts and monitoring mechanisms by the Security Council to promote compliance with its arms embargoes. While arms embargoes are useful in controlling the illegal cross-border movement of small arms into conflict areas, they are ineffective in controlling and eliminating arms that already exist in such areas. The African Group therefore wishes to re-emphasize the need for effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes as part of United Nations peacekeeping mandates. Those mandates should also include weapons collection, disposal and destruction. That remains the most reliable way of avoiding a relapse into conflict. The African Group continues to call on the international community to appreciate the enormity and seriousness of the situation.

Recent studies have shown that illicit brokering in arms plays a significant role in the illicit arms trade. The establishment of an effective international regime to control the practice has therefore become necessary. The African Group calls on Member States to abide by their commitments to enhance international cooperation and the exchange of information as a prelude to the establishment of such a regime.

The African Group calls on the international community to intensify efforts at investigating, identifying and addressing the link between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the illicit

exploitation of natural and other resources, particularly those of poor countries, such as those in Africa. It is common knowledge that proceeds from the illegal exploitation of natural resources are channelled into funding the illicit arms trade.

The cooperation and assistance of the international community will be absolutely necessary in confronting the negative effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the most affected countries and regions. It is in the light of that fact, together with the need to implement the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms, that African countries have been participating actively, mostly as recipient States, in the Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures. For that reason, the African Group is disappointed at the fact that a draft resolution on the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures, which is very important to Africa, will not be submitted during this session.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): I shall be speaking on three categories of conventional weapons.

During the general debate on all disarmament and international security items on the agenda of the First Committee, my delegation stated its views on certain aspects of the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My delegation associates itself with the statement made on that issue by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, as well the statements made by the representatives of South Africa, Mali, Japan, Colombia and others. For obvious reasons, Sierra Leone has co-sponsored all the draft resolutions now before us on small arms. In our view, all of them take into account, if not in letter then in spirit, the outcome of the recently held first Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The implementation of the draft resolutions that we believe, and hope, we will adopt next week relating to small arms should be seen in the context of the Programme of Action.

The Programme of Action obviously has a number of weaknesses; I mentioned one of them in my statement last week. However, in our view, the Programme of Action is the most comprehensive blueprint at the disposal of the international community for curbing the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It charts the way forward in our efforts at the national, regional and global levels to save the lives of millions of people, especially innocent civilians in rebel armed conflicts in many developing countries.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is not the cause of conflict — for example, in our subregion of West Africa. However, it has become one of the principal instruments of mass destruction in the world today. We have to recognize that, and respond accordingly and resolutely. Therefore, in my delegation's opinion, we must view and use the Programme of Action as a means of promoting measures — including, as appropriate, legally binding instruments — in the areas of identifying, marking, tracing, trading and re-exporting these weapons.

Allow me to mention two other categories of conventional weapons.

As a State party of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — otherwise known as the Mine Ban, or Ottawa, Convention — the delegation of Sierra Leone is pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.43, regarding the Convention. We do so not merely because we are a State party, but also because of our deep regret over the fact that anti-personnel landmines have caused, and continue to cause, great human suffering in conflicts throughout the world. The large number of sponsors of the draft resolution — at the moment, I believe that includes almost half the entire membership of the United Nations — also reflects that regret, in addition to being an expression of the determination of the international community at large to rid the world of those small and often inexpensive, but vicious, weapons.

Fortunately for us, rebels made only relatively limited use of anti-personnel landmines in their 11-year war against the people of Sierra Leone. I say fortunately because we are aware of the bitter experiences of our sister African countries, such as Angola and Mozambique. In Sierra Leone it is reported that less that 150 anti-personnel mines were unaccounted for at the end of the rebel war. The number of casualties from the use of anti-personnel mines, if any, is not known. However, from a humanitarian perspective, a single anti-personnel

landmine used, or still buried somewhere in any theatre of armed conflict, is one too many.

That is why Sierra Leone, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.43, is joining others in reaffirming its determination, as expressed in the second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, to put an end to the suffering and casualties, whatever the numbers, caused by anti-personnel mines. There is of course the other dimension of the problem, namely, its negative impact on post-conflict economic and social reconstruction and development. The use of anti-personnel mines creates new categories of persons with physical disabilities and places a heavy strain on the already weak health-care sectors of mine-affected developing countries. In that connection, operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution addresses our hope that all concerned will cooperate in promoting and supporting the care, rehabilitation and integration of victims of anti-personnel mines.

As a State party to the Mine Ban Convention, Sierra Leone recognizes its obligations under that treaty. We are committed to its full and effective implementation and to compliance with its provisions. As a first step, I am pleased to inform the First Committee that Sierra Leone will soon forward its initial report under article 7 to the Secretary-General. We share the view that reporting under article 7 is an important tool in measuring the Convention's implementation and assessing the needs of mine-affected States.

Finally, I would like to turn to another instrument that is closely related to the anti-personnel landmines Convention. I am referring to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which is also known as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Last year, we were a sponsor of resolution 57/74, on the implementation of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We are once again pleased to be a sponsor of this year's draft resolution on the subject, which is contained in document A/C.1/58/L.50.

Our decision to continue to be a sponsor of that draft resolution is based on two premises. First, it is consistent with our policy of contributing, as far as possible and within our modest capabilities, to the universality of multilateral disarmament and arms control regimes, including those that are closely linked to international humanitarian law. Indeed, our objective is to help promote the attainment of universality for all multilateral instruments aimed at human security — instruments ranging from those on anti-personnel landmines and small arms and light weapons, to nuclear, chemical, biological and other weapons of human destruction.

Secondly, it is in our own national interest to associate ourselves with at least the principal elements of the draft resolution. As a country emerging from an armed conflict, we are concerned about the dangers posed to civilians from anti-personnel landmines that may have been planted by rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). But we are more concerned about the strong possibility of the existence of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war. The war is definitely over, but efforts to cope with the consequences of the conflict have only just begun. For instance, farmers have returned to their farms. However, as they plow their rice fields they do not know what their farm implements will strike in areas that may have been used as underground ammunition dumps. They do not know whether or not their children will pick up war material believing that it could be used as a toy — and out of curiosity try to dismantle it — only to be injured or even killed.

We cannot underestimate the risk that Sierra Leoneans, especially those in the countryside, face from unexploded munitions and explosive remnants of war. In the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement with the RUF rebels, we addressed this problem under article XIX by making provision for the exchange of information about the positions and descriptions of all known unexploded bombs and explosive ordnance devices, as well as minefields, booby traps, wire entanglements and all other physical or military hazards. Those may still exist in the forests and hills of parts of the country. Therefore, we have to inform the civilian population about these hazardous devices and about the possibility of their existence in parts of the country. The need to raise awareness about the existence and the humanitarian consequences of explosive remnants of war in Sierra Leone is obvious. That is one of the reasons why Sierra Leone, a signatory to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, has joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.50.

The necessary measures required for Sierra Leone to become a party to the Convention are under consideration by my Government. Meanwhile, my delegation is following with interest all activities in the United Nations system related to unexploded remnants of war, as well as discussions on a proposed instrument in that regard that are part of the international disarmament and international security agenda.

Ms. Jutzi (Canada): An important dimension of our work has broad societal impact, directly affecting people in their daily lives and in their immediate communities. How we approach and deal with many conventional-weapons issues goes well beyond traditional arms control. Much of it is impelled by human security, by humanitarian concerns and by international humanitarian law. It is indeed positive that progress has been witnessed in those areas in the past year, reflecting collective determination to address the issues of small arms, conventional weapons — including explosive remnants of war — and landmines, although much still remains to be achieved.

Every week small arms and light weapons claim an average of 10,000 lives. They are the weapons of choice in current armed conflicts, killing an estimated 300,000 people a year in conflict situations alone. From small handguns to automatic assault rifles, these instruments of social and economic destruction have moved beyond traditional battlefields and war-torn regions: they have moved into our streets and into our homes. They affect developing and developed nations alike.

The issue of small arms has gained increased visibility since the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in July 2001, and the recently held first Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which took place in July 2003. Governments, non-governmental organizations and international and regional agencies have all worked together to implement that impressive framework for concrete action. We welcome those efforts and the work that has been achieved to date. The fact remains, however, that small arms and light weapons still produce mass deaths and still continue to destroy communities. We must use our time and resources wisely if actual progress is to be made, leading into the 2005 Biennial Meeting and the 2006 Review Conference.

Progress must continue on curbing the availability and misuse of small arms. Increased attention must be given to the issue of State responsibility for arms transfers, both transfers between States and transfers to non-State actors, as well as to such issues as the misuse of small arms by law enforcement officials.

Addressing the multiple challenges posed by small arms is a daunting task, but the cost of the availability and misuse of those weapons is even more staggering — to economic development, to basic services such as health and education and to community livelihoods. We ignore this tragedy at the peril of human, regional and, ultimately, global security.

Canada's primary goal in supporting small-arms initiatives and advancing the implementation of the Programme of Action is to make people and their communities safer. That should be what motivates us all here, namely to stop the death and human suffering caused by small arms. There are many facets to our work on small arms, but the human focus must remain our guiding principle. That people-centred approach must also be our benchmark to measure progress and to further the work to address these far-reaching and important issues. Our hope is that the work of the First Committee will contribute towards achieving that goal.

Let me now turn to two other areas with humanitarian dimensions.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is a flexible arms control instrument whose purpose is to prohibit or restrict the use of certain weapons that may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have other indiscriminate effects, with a focus on balancing military needs with humanitarian concerns. Canada continues to encourage States not parties to the Convention to review their positions and to consider acceding to the Convention. We welcome Chile, the most recent adherent.

In December 2002, States parties established a group of governmental experts to negotiate an instrument to address the post-conflict humanitarian concerns associated with "explosive remnants of war". The term explosive remnants of war describes weapons that have not worked as designed and that remain on the ground in the target area after hostilities have ceased. The term encompasses, but is much broader than, "unexploded sub-munitions from cluster

bombs" — a problem identified during recent conflicts — and "abandoned ordnance".

Canada has been active in the deliberations on explosive remnants of war. We want the next round of negotiations to culminate in a legally binding instrument that comprehensively addresses the humanitarian problems of explosive remnants of war. We believe that should be possible. The solutions must involve the means to prevent ordnance from becoming unexploded, the provision of warnings to civilian populations of the dangers of unexploded and abandoned ordnance and the means to ensure the rapid and safe post-conflict clearance of unexploded and abandoned ordnance. The results must make a difference on the ground in post-conflict environments and in people's lives. Canada is committed to international efforts to minimize the effects of explosive remnants of war through clearance, recording and transfer of information, risk education and assistance and cooperation.

Canada also believes it is important that States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons develop and agree on a broad mandate to negotiate a legally binding protocol that deals with the humanitarian problem of anti-vehicle mines in all its aspects. International humanitarian law covering those weapons must be reinforced to reflect that irresponsible use of anti-vehicle mines hinders humanitarian operations and impacts on civilians. We therefore recently co-sponsored a United States-led proposal to address aspects of the humanitarian impact of anti-vehicle mines.

At the Second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, in December 2001, States parties agreed to extend the scope of application of the Convention as a whole, so that its existing Protocols would also apply in situations of non-international armed conflict. Canada became the first State party to deposit its instrument of acceptance of that amendment, in July 2002. Almost two years since that amendment, we are two ratifications away from entry-into-force. Canada believes it is important that the amendment receive the required 20 ratifications by at least December 2003, in time for the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in order that we may proudly point to the amendment as another advancement for international humanitarian law. We urge all States parties that have not yet done so to ratify the amendment as soon as possible.

Canada intends to make a detailed statement on landmines two weeks from now in the General Assembly debate on mine action. In this forum, we want to reiterate our expectation that the core humanitarian objectives of the Ottawa Landmines Convention will be realized through continued progress and positive strides. We also wish to emphasize our commitment to ensuring a successful 2004 Review Conference, in Nairobi, Kenya, that contributes to achieving that goal. To lend political impetus, we encourage representation at the highest possible level by all States and organizations at the high-level segment, which is planned for 3 December 2004.

True security must encompass all dimensions, from weapons of mass destruction to conventional arms. Human security must always be at the forefront of our preoccupations, as a guiding principle. Canada is most encouraged by recent progress, and looks forward to the continuing contribution that can be made by the First Committee and its members to achieving a secure world for all.

The Chairman: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.13.

Mr. Udedibia (Nigeria): I apologize for asking for the floor once again. On behalf of the African Group, I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.13, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa".

The Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa has continued to carry out activities in support of the efforts of African States in the areas of peace and security. The draft resolution considers the important role that the Regional Centre can play in promoting confidence-building and arms-limitation measures at the regional level. It highlights the fact that the Centre has received an increasing number of requests from Member States in the African region for substantive support for several peace initiatives and conflict-resolution activities in the region.

The draft resolution further highlights the fact — supported by the Secretary-General — that very limited financial contributions have been made to the Centre, despite continued fund-raising efforts. Out of concern that the continued financial difficulties of the Centre

are impairing its ability to realize its full potential and to adequately fulfil its mandates, the draft resolution emphasizes the need to provide the Centre with the necessary resources to enable it to strengthen its activities and carry out its programmes. The draft resolution appeals to all States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to make voluntary contributions in order to strengthen the programmes and activities of the Regional Centre and facilitate their implementation. The draft resolution reaffirms strong support for the revitalization of the Centre itself, and requests the Secretary-General to provide the necessary support to the Centre in order to produce greater achievements and results.

The draft resolution further appeals to the Regional Centre to take steps — in cooperation with the African Union, regional and subregional organizations and African States — to promote the consistent implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In terms of substance and objectives, the draft resolution is the same as the one submitted by the African Group during the fifty-sixth session. In the past, this draft resolution has always been adopted without a vote by the General Assembly. The African Group would appreciate the support of all Member States in adopting the draft resolution without a vote at this session.

The Chairman: I now give the floor to the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of France and the Netherlands, I would like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46 to the First Committee at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The draft resolution is entitled "Promotion at the regional level in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe of the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects". I would like to thank all the countries that provided advice regarding the introduction and improvement of our draft. It was thanks to their assistance that this draft resolution, which we hope will be adopted by consensus, is being introduced today. We continue to listen to the advice of all delegations in order to achieve a draft resolution that has the unreserved support of all States. If all agree, we remain open to making further improvements to the text of the draft resolution.

Curbing the trade in small arms is a major concern for the international community. That concern, which was underscored by the Programme of Action, is simultaneously a global, regional and national concern. We in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have ourselves faced a number of serious problems in connection with that trade. The conflicts that took place in the former Yugoslavia and the changes in Eastern Europe have led to a dangerous increase in the trafficking in small arms and light weapons throughout the continent. Those weapons can today be found within our national territories. However, the illicit trafficking in those weapons has unfortunately not been limited to the European continent; it also exists in conflict regions. Weapons from the Balkans have already been found on the African continent. The international peacekeeping force in Africa has also noted that non-State actors have access to these weapons through an uncontrolled trade. That contagion could affect other regions of the world tomorrow.

Like regional efforts in other parts of the world, the efforts of the OSCE in Europe have led to beneficial results for all. The international community as a whole should support regional efforts. Each of those efforts has its own logic, and no single action is necessarily a model for other regions. But they are mutually complementary and serve to contribute together to an overall objective, namely, our common objective.

At the regional level, the OSCE this year adopted eight far-reaching best-practice guidelines that were the result of considerable work. The draft resolution submitted by the Netherlands and France seeks to emphasize the measures necessary to implement the United Nations Programme of Action adopted in July 2001. It is both proper and important that the OSCE highlight its achievements in the area of small arms and light weapons. In its regional dimension, the draft resolution complements the important framework draft resolution on small arms and light weapons submitted annually by Japan and Colombia. It is also important that this draft resolution be submitted to the General Assembly again this year, given that this is the year that the OSCE will complete its work on the development of guidelines.

The framework draft resolution submitted by South Africa, Japan and Colombia is in line with the comprehensive United Nations Programme of Action. This year it focuses on such important operational aspects as tracing and marking, which France and the Netherlands very much support. In referring to regional contributions, separate draft resolutions have been deemed desirable this year. The high-quality draft resolution introduced by Mali, which we fully support, likewise emphasizes in particular regional action on the African continent.

The draft resolution we are introducing does not aim to be a customary one. It does not include the traditional final operational paragraph placing this item on the agenda of the next session of the General Assembly. I would like to remind the Committee that the European Union recommended that that paragraph be omitted from all draft resolutions of the First Committee. We, along with the Netherlands, therefore hope that we will be making a twofold contribution to the spirit of reform, both in form and substance.

We very much hope that our draft resolution will enjoy the full support of the General Assembly. We shall continue to explain our draft resolution and will, in the upcoming days, organize meetings to that end. Our delegation is also working individually in an effort to inform members of the Committee. I would like to thank representatives for their enthusiastic support for our draft resolution.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I would briefly like to take the floor to speak in support of the Ambassador of France, who has just introduced draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46, on the implementation at the regional level in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) of the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Together with France, the Netherlands has presented this draft resolution in its capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. We are very happy to be able to do that together with France, because one of the central themes of our tenure as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE has been the issue of trafficking in general. Obviously, however, that includes the important issue of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in our region. We are therefore particularly pleased that, together with France, we have been able to introduce this draft resolution to the First Committee this year.

We think that the achievements of the OSCE are very much worth bringing to the attention of the General Assembly. What we have done in the OSCE in the field of small arms and light weapons — in particular the handbook on best practices — is important. We introduced the handbook at the first Biennial Meeting of States to consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held here in New York in July. That was a successful presentation that enjoyed very good attendance.

Finally, I would like to express the hope and the confidence of my delegation that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman: I give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.50.

Ms. Essenli (Sweden): As this is the first time that I take the floor in the First Committee, I would first like to congratulate Ambassador Sareva on his assumption of the chairpersonship of this important Committee. My delegation is very confident that, thanks to his able and professional leadership, we will be successful. I pledge to him my delegation's full cooperation. Of course, my congratulations also go out to the other members of the Bureau.

I have asked for the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.50, on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). I do so on behalf of almost 60 sponsoring delegations. For the sake of brevity, I shall refrain from reading out all the names, but they are spelled out in the written copy of my statement. Sweden is very grateful to all the sponsoring countries for their support for this very essential draft resolution.

This is a very important year for the entire regime on certain conventional weapons. The treaty on the subject forms an essential and integral part of international law applicable to armed conflict. It is designed to provide a framework within which humanitarian concerns regarding conventional weapons

can be dealt with. We need the Convention to be a dynamic instrument responding to the many urgent humanitarian challenges before us. We also need the Convention to address the continued occurrence of civilians being afflicted by armed conflicts.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight two important issues, as reflected in this year's draft resolution. First, a Group of Governmental Experts has worked diligently throughout the year and will meet, for the third time this year, in November — a few weeks after the end of this session of the First Committee. The Group has addressed explosive remnants of war, mines other than anti-personnel mines and the issue of compliance. The draft resolution before you expresses well deserved support for the work conducted by the Group and encourages it and the Chairman-designate to submit a proposal for an instrument on explosive remnants of war, as well as reports on mines other than anti-personnel mines and on compliance, to States Parties for consideration at their meeting in November.

Sweden strongly believes that we must do our utmost in November in order to agree on an instrument on explosive remnants of war. Such an instrument should, in a credible way, contribute to minimizing the humanitarian consequences caused by explosive remnants of war. It is also important that we make substantial progress with regard to mines other than anti-personnel mines and on the issue of compliance.

Secondly, the draft resolution calls upon all States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols and to adhere to its provisions, including the important amendment extending the scope of the Convention to include armed conflicts of a non-international character.

I would also like to mention, as a practical contribution to the rationalization of work in this Committee, that we are, this year, not asking for a report from the Secretary-General on ratifications and accessions to the CCW. Instead, we request that the General Assembly be periodically informed by electronic means.

Finally, let me express the strong support of my Government for the Chairman-designate and for the two coordinators in conducting their work. I can assure you that Sweden will work hard so that we can achieve real progress in November this year.

In conclusion, I wish to express the sincere hopes of all of the sponsors that the draft resolution will, as in previous years, be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Sweden for her kind words addressed to the Chair and to other members of the Bureau.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I would like to take the floor to speak in support of the statement made by the representative of Sweden, who has just introduced draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.50 on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

The Netherlands attaches great importance to the revitalization of this important Convention that aims to reduce the humanitarian concerns raised by armed conflict, by prohibiting or restricting the use of certain conventional weapons, and by establishing post-conflict remedial measures to protect civilian populations.

One important element of the work in the CCW framework, as was mentioned by the Swedish delegation, is the negotiation of an instrument on the explosive remnants of war. This is a humanitarian priority, because the number of casualties caused by unexploded ordnance tends to exceed the number of victims caused by mines. Last year, the States parties to the Convention appointed the Netherlands to act as a coordinator to chair those negotiations.

I can inform this Committee that the negotiations have made considerable progress over the past year. The draft text focuses on post-conflict remedial measures to minimize the effects of unexploded ordnance. Such measures include clearance, removal, destruction, warning, provision of information, and cooperation and assistance, including victim assistance. There is also a voluntary preventive dimension in the draft text that aims to improve the reliability of munitions, as a consequence of which there would remain less unexploded ordnance on the battlefield after a conflict.

We very much hope that the States parties will be able to reach consensus on an instrument on explosive remnants of war at their upcoming meeting in the last week of November. It is my feeling that after three years of work on this issue in the CCW framework, the text is sufficiently mature to provide a good basis for a successful outcome.

Mr. Faessler (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland attaches the highest importance to multilateral cooperation in the area of conventional weapons within the general meaning of the term. I would like to briefly address the question of anti-personnel mines, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and small arms and light weapons. These weapons — together with explosive remnants that remain in the ground after the end of hostilities — are real weapons of mass destruction. Every year they cause several hundred thousand deaths and injuries, particularly among civilian populations.

The general debate of last week showed how much importance delegations attach to the problem of conventional weapons and to the humanitarian concerns raised by the use of such weapons. Switzerland supports all First Committee draft resolutions on this issue and hopes that other delegations will also do so.

Our joint efforts to solve the problems caused by conventional weapons and our humanitarian concerns about the use of such weapons are part of a wider concern for human security and for the economic and social development of each country. Action by the international community on conventional weapons should therefore not only be closely coordinated with assistance programmes for economic and social development but should, if possible, be integrated into such programmes in a long-term development perspective. The simple fact is that there can be no economic and social development if illicit conventional weapons continue to cause innumerable civilian deaths and injuries and devastate entire regions. A number of delegations here represent States affected by these kinds of weapons and have clearly described those effects.

There is also a linkage between the problem of conventional weapons and the necessity to help the victims. In the field of victim assistance, Switzerland, in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other organizations, has developed a strategic concept that includes victims of all forms of violence. It is urgent that we reframe that issue within the wider context of post-conflict reconstruction and incorporate in a strategy of longer-term development cooperation. Valuable experience has already been gained in various countries, including Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nicaragua and Mozambique. This global approach has been widely recognized and is also used by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Today, the international community has at its disposal a number of important multilateral instruments in the area of conventional weapons: the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its four Protocols, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. My country calls on all States which have not already done so to sign and ratify those instruments as soon as possible and to adhere to and implement all the measures specified in the Programme of Action.

On the subject of the Mine Ban Treaty, which will be discussed in the General Assembly, my country is very pleased with the success of the Fifth Conference of States Parties, which ended some weeks ago in Bangkok. That Conference enabled participants to measure the substantial progress that has been made since the Convention entered into force, especially with regard to the destruction of mine stockpiles. It underlined once again the importance of dealing with the question of non-State actors within the framework of the Ottawa Convention. Finally, the Bangkok meeting paved the way for the First Review Conference which will be held in Nairobi next year, and which will hopefully set in motion preparations for achieving a second important objective of the Convention, the clearing of anti-personnel mine fields.

On the subject of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, my country supports the work on explosive remnants of war. It hopes that it will soon be possible to adopt a new instrument on that subject, which will be substantial and legally binding. Switzerland also hopes that all States parties will be willing to accept a system of preventive technical measures for sub-munitions to prevent them from becoming explosive remnants of war. This would undoubtedly have a positive and important impact on the humanitarian situation in regions affected by the use of such munitions, without simultaneously weakening military capacity. Finally, in view of the many fatal accidents caused by mines other than anti-personnel mines, my country considers it necessary

that more specific regulations should be drawn up for this area within the framework of the 1980 Convention.

On the subject of small arms and light weapons, the category of conventional weapons that causes the largest number of victims, my country attaches great importance to the rapid implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In this context, we are delighted with the success of the first Biennial Meeting, held in New York in July. That conference highlighted a number of important initiatives for implementing the Programme of Action, especially in the areas of export control, marking and tracing, security of stocks and strengthening of regional cooperation. The large number of national reports proves that States are willing to become increasingly active in the fight against illicit small arms and light weapons on a national and on a global level. Nevertheless, much remains to be done. It is essential that this commitment does not flag and that States are determined to achieve the goals they have set for themselves.

It is in the framework of this Programme of Action that we are seeking to improve the marking and the traceability of illicit small arms and light weapons. Switzerland, together with France, has been active for a long time in efforts to draft an international instrument on marking and tracing. Switzerland congratulates the Group of Governmental Experts on its final report. This group recommends the opening of negotiations with a view to drafting an international instrument on the marking and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons. This recommendation is included in the draft resolution on small arms and light weapons proposed by South Africa, Japan and Colombia. My delegation hopes that this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote. If a negotiation process should be launched, Switzerland would be willing to chair the working group that would be established to that end. My country is committed to the elaboration of an instrument that will be an appropriate response to the challenges posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Esenli (Turkey): Mr. Chairman, since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, allow me at the outset to express my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that under your able leadership, the meeting will be successfully guided through its agenda. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation throughout the proceedings. I also would like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau as well.

Under agenda item 73, "General and complete disarmament", I wish to update the Committee on Turkey's activities regarding anti-personnel landmines.

In view of the human suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel landmines, the international community has long been endeavouring to take effective measures to prevent their use. The international efforts to rid the world of this scourge came to fruition by the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention in 1999. The security situation around Turkey had precluded it from signing the Convention at the time of its conclusion. Nevertheless, as an expression of its commitment to the humanitarian objectives of the Convention, Turkey declared three-year renewable comprehensive moratoria on all anti-personnel landmines, exports and transfers, starting in 1996 for two successive terms, and indefinitely in 2002.

Turkey had also engaged in certain initiatives that were aimed at mine-clearance in common border areas with neighbouring States, with a view to avoiding the use of such mines in the future. Paragon to the provisions of the Ottawa Convention and other relevant instruments on anti-personnel landmines, the initiatives taken by Turkey are comprised of even more rigorous compliance and verification measures.

In this respect, Turkey offered to conclude bilateral agreements with Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia and Azerbaijan that would free common border areas from anti-personnel mines. The bilateral agreement that was concluded with Bulgaria in March 1999 entered into force in May 2002. In compliance with the provisions of the agreement, mine-clearance activity has been finalized and the annual exchange of information for this year was realized in April 2003. The ratification process of the agreement with Georgia is under way at the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

In other mine clearance activities under way around the Armenian border of Turkey, 37,234 square metres of mined area and mines in the vicinity of security installations have thus far been cleared in this region. During these operations, a total of 14,000

mines have been cleared. Mine clearance along the Turkish border with Syria is another priority objective of Turkey. The Turkish Government, as another sign of firm commitment to fulfil the provisions stipulated by the Convention, has allocated $17 million for mine-clearance activities in this region alone. Following the completion of mine-clearance activity, the land free of mines will be open for agriculture. By the same token, mine-clearance in other areas is also under consideration.

Turkey, as an observer at the First Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention in Maputo in May 1999, announced its intention to become a party to the Convention during the first decade of the new millennium. I would like to recall that, in a joint statement on 6 April 2001, Turkey and Greece announced their decision to concurrently conclude procedures that would make both States parties to the Ottawa Convention. It was also agreed that the instruments of ratification by Greece and accession by Turkey would be deposited simultaneously with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in due course. In line with this agreement, the appropriate constitutional procedures were completed in both countries and the Turkish and Greek Foreign Ministers together deposited their respective instruments of accession to and ratification of the Convention with the United Nations on 25 September 2003 in the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada. We sincerely hope that, with this important development, the efforts aimed at mine-clearance in our region in particular and the world in general will gain new impetus and vigour.

Mr. Albert (Democratic Republic of Congo) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to return, as all the other delegations have done, to the question of small arms. We are all aware of the future threat that nuclear weapons represent for international peace and security and so our efforts are more directed to prevent and dispel that future danger. However, it is well known that in today's world, the agent for terror and destruction and the massacre of thousands of human lives, ignoring principles of ethics and morality, is small arms and light weapons.

The various delegations within the First Committee have recognized through their statements that recent armed conflicts are fostered by the presence of small arms and light weapons. They also recognize that those weapons are also weapons of mass destruction. Despite the efforts and the various mechanisms put into place at the global, regional, subregional and national levels to combat the traffic and uncontrolled trade in such weapons, they continue to fuel sources of conflict and threaten international peace and security.

The Secretary-General in the foreword to his excellent report contained in document A/58/138, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", noted the following:

> "... small arms and light weapons are also used by States to meet their legitimate self-defence and security needs. It is a well-known fact that the overwhelming majority of small arms and light weapons start their life cycle as legally produced commodities. However, many such weapons are diverted to illicit markets through unlawful transfers, theft or the breakdown of State control".

We recognize the efforts by delegations who have submitted various draft resolutions with the sole aim of combating this scourge. My delegation reassures them of its constant availability to support those efforts.

Since there is apparent consensus and a will to counteract this scourge, my delegation considers that it is time to recall to Member States their responsibilities to do so. My delegation suggests that there should be negotiations towards a binding convention prohibiting the trade and illicit trafficking in small arms. That would allow the producer States to take a firm commitment with a view to monitoring transactions in small arms, whereas importing countries would be called upon to limit their stockpiles of small arms and light weapons to those necessary to ensure their national security, and not to supply the black market and other sources of tension.

My delegation also considers that putting this convention in place will bring added value to existing mechanisms and initiatives in order to accelerate general disarmament that we all wish for.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), like many other countries whose representatives have already spoken before me.

Since joining the CCW in May 2001, the Republic of Korea has participated in various efforts to

further develop the CCW regime. In this vein, my delegation is pleased to note that the Government of the Republic of Korea deposited its instrument for acceptance and the amended article 1 of the CCW in February this year. We further welcome China's ratification of the amendment to article 1 of the Convention.

Out of our concern for the serious humanitarian impact of the explosive remnants of war, my Government has made efforts to contribute to the ongoing negotiations in Geneva. We hope that these negotiations will lead to a successful outcome at the earliest possible date. My delegation notes with appreciation the substantial progress that has been made to this end throughout this year's negotiations.

Taking this opportunity, my delegation would like to voice its support for the commencement of negotiations on a legally binding instrument on anti-vehicle landmines. In this regard, I wish to express the strong support of my Government for the Chairman-designate and for the two coordinators in concluding their work successfully.

Finally, as in the previous year, the Republic of Korea is pleased to sponsor the draft resolution on CCW, tabled and just introduced by the Swedish delegation. We also hope that this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote as in previous years.

Mr. Shalita (Rwanda): This being the first time my delegation takes the floor in the First Committee in this session, I would like to begin by congratulating you and the Bureau upon your election, and on the excellent manner in hich you have steered our work so far.

My delegation would like to align itself with the statement made on behalf of the group of African States by the representative of Nigeria.

Allow me to return to the issue of small arms and light weapons. The presence and massive proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa and in West Africa, poses a great threat to peace, stability and socio-economic development, and in some cases threatens the very existence of nation States.

Rwanda has borne the brunt of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Following the genocide in 1994, thousands of genocidal killers fled to neighbouring countries where they remobilized with the intention of returning to the country to continue the genocide. Despite several General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and an arms embargo against them, they remain active today and continue to receive illicit shipments of small arms and light weapons. The result of this for the Great Lakes region has been greater insecurity, indiscriminate killing and maiming of innocent civilians, displacement of tens of thousands of people, and economic stagnation or regression. In the case of neighbouring Burundi, the illicit trade has led to an upsurge in rebel attacks over the last 12 months, despite the establishment of a transitional Government comprising all signatories to the peace process.

Rwanda shares the view of the Group of Governmental Experts on Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, that the illicit trade sustains conflicts, exacerbates violence, contributes to displacement of civilians, and fuels crime and conflict. Rwanda welcomes the adoption by consensus of the report of the first Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York in July. We also welcome the recommendation of the Group of Experts on the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. We call for urgent action on this recommendation so that negotiations can begin to establish this international instrument. We commend the activities undertaken by Member States, the United Nations system, and civil society groups to implement the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade.

Rwanda is proud to be among those States that have designated national focal points to act as liaisons on the implementation of the Programme of Action. We are also among those States that have established national coordinating agencies to ensure holistic, integrated and coherent implementation of the Programme of Action.

It is our belief that the international community would achieve best results by focusing the efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on the exercise of more stringent controls at the source — the manufacturers and suppliers. The countries with the greatest problem with respect to the illicit trade are also the least developed countries, with

very limited human and material capacity to mount effective controls on the illicit trade. As Rwanda endeavours to implement the Programme of Action, we appeal to the international community to provide more support to enable us to enhance our capacity to fight the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. There is need for greater support to establish and empower national coordinating agencies and focal points, particularly through manpower training.

Finally, my delegation would like to place on record its wholehearted support for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.1, introduced today by South Africa. The draft resolution is in line with the common African position enshrined in the Bamako and Nairobi Declarations. We therefore look forward to its adoption and to convening a conference to review the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action in 2006.

Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time that my delegation is speaking. I should like to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, upon your election to serve as Chairman of the First Committee. I wish you much success. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

I am speaking to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.54, entitled "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa". I have the honour to introduce this text on behalf of the members of the Standing Advisory Committee: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and São Tomé and Principe.

As you know, the region of Central Africa, which has experienced conflicts of all types over these past years, is beginning to recover through the use of confidence-building measures that Member States have been able to develop in their relations. Thanks to mechanisms put in place, a region abounding in human and material potential that seeks recovery can take the opportunity to break away from egocentric and isolationist models. By regrouping and development, the subregion can ensure its recovery, but such development cannot occur without peace. Peace and development are the fundamental elements for the consolidation of relations of good-neighbourliness.

The establishment in 1992 of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, whose activities are described in detail in the report of the Secretary-General, consolidates this approach, even if the prevention of conflicts remains a leitmotif in our discussions. The regular meetings of the Advisory Committee take up specific, topical items, as they did in Brazzaville from 12 to 14 May 2003, at a seminar on the implementation in the Central African Region of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The meetings also follow up on the Programme of Action adopted at a ministerial meeting. The twentieth ministerial meeting of the Committee, which will be held from 27 to 31 October 2003 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, will officially launch the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), which will endorse and reinforce measures that have already been taken at the regional level.

Indeed, we have to contribute to stabilizing the region by taking concrete disarmament measures to maintain peace, to promote sustainable development, to respect human rights, and to continue the fight against HIV-AIDS. The text of the draft resolution that has been submitted for the Committee's consideration has not been changed in substance from last year's resolution. I would like to reiterate the wish of the members of the Advisory Committee to see the draft resolution adopted by consensus as in previous years, so that the activities of the secretariat of the Committee could be encouraged and supported as a whole.

On behalf of the States members of the Advisory Committee, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for having sent an inter-agency mission to Central Africa, the report for which will further detail and support the needs that they have put forward by the States of Central Africa.

Mr. Shaw (Australia): Australia is strongly committed to addressing the problems posed by the proliferation and excessive accumulation of conventional weapons. Australia fully endorses and associates itself with the statement on small arms delivered by New Zealand on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum. Australia has been working closely with regional partners to address the challenges of small

arms proliferation in the Pacific. To this end, we assisted in the development of model legislation on weapons controls, adopted by the Pacific Island Forum in August this year.

We commend Ambassador Inoguchi on her successful chairing of the United Nations Biennial Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Conference provided a useful opportunity to reflect on progress in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action and to build on cumulative efforts to enhance cooperation to combat the illicit trade in small arms. Australia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the feasibility of developing an international instrument to mark and trace small arms and light weapons, and we are again pleased to be able to sponsor the First Committee draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, document A/C.1/58/L.1, as prepared and tabled by the delegations of Colombia, Japan and South Africa.

Australia welcomes progress achieved to date and urges States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to adopt a legally binding instrument on explosive remnants of war at the next meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts in November. The current draft framework paper developed by Ambassador Sanders provides a sound basis for consensus on a legally binding instrument.

Australia supports the fifteen-nation proposal on mines other than antipersonnel mines, and we urge States to take the next step in addressing the humanitarian impact of such mines and agree to a negotiating a mandate on a legally binding instrument.

We are again pleased to co-sponsor the First Committee resolution on the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) contained in document A/C.1/58/L.50.

Finally, Australia urges all States to submit annual returns to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Transparency in armaments is a crucial element of efforts to enhance confidence and security at regional and international levels. Australia welcomes the expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and artillery between 75 and 100 mm, changes that increase the Register's relevance to current security concerns. We are again pleased to co-sponsor the resolution on transparency in armaments contained in document A/C.1/58/L.45.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The member States of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and its associated States, Bolivia and Chile, in whose name my delegation is speaking, wish to address two issues to which they attach great relevance, that is to say, the Ottawa Convention on Landmines and the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

With regard to the first issue, anti-personnel landmines, MERCOSUR and its associated countries are part of a continent that has suffered and continues to suffer the devastating and permanent consequences of the existence of antipersonnel mines. This experience on our continent has led us to give our full support, within in the Organization of American States (OAS), to the declaration of the western hemisphere as a zone free of such weapons. We did this even before having joined our voices with those who had previously subscribed to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which our six countries have ratified.

In addition, and in a further demonstration of political will, the heads of State of MERCOSUR and the associated States declared our subregion a zone of peace, free of weapons of mass destruction, and adopted measures that ensured, amongst others, the total elimination of anti-personnel mines.

Within these international, regional and subregional frameworks, the member and associated countries of MERCOSUR have begun to implement, through their national legislation, a series of legal harmonization measures enabling our countries to comply with the instruments and decisions adopted amongst the six countries, with a special emphasis on the destruction of those arsenals that are under their respective jurisdictions.

Such actions, which stem from the need to eliminate the danger posed by weapons whose effects continue on after the very conflicts that occasioned their use, would mean that our region would have the authority to ensure that all States that have as yet not done so would adhere to the Ottawa Convention, particularly those States where the largest weapons manufacturing is concentrated.

Such weapons affect more than fifty States; but we must not see this as just another statistic. When speaking of affected States, we are speaking of men, women and children who are the victims of these weapons. We are speaking of large portions of land that still cannot be used for agriculture or any other activity that serves to feed a population. We are speaking of obstacles to development. For our countries, these problems are a priority.

The humanitarian aspects of this issue are also priorities: the fact that there are hundreds of thousands of victims that must live with the consequences of these weapons reaffirms the importance of continuing our call for the strengthening of all efforts towards cooperation, from mine-clearance activity, in which some of our countries participate within the framework of United Nations peacekeeping operations, to improving security for development. In this regard, we welcome activities that involve the donor countries in particular.

The Fifth Meeting of States Parties, recently held in Thailand, bore witness to the level of activity in this area, the affected populations' increased participation in programmes and workshops, and the higher level of resources allocated to expand the range of activities and to destroy stockpiled antipersonnel mines. In this connection, we would like to highlight the destruction of such weapons undertaken by our countries during the past year. But while encouraging, these activities still do not suffice, since as long as the community remains unable to eradicate these weapons entirely, the danger persists.

MERCOSUR member and associated States, committed to the right to a safe life and engaging their experience and possibilities, are confident that the number of States parties to the Ottawa Convention will continue to grow and that, at the same time, an increasing number of countries will actively cooperate in this endeavour.

With regard to the second issue, all of us have implemented a series of initiatives, such as the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on the Illicit Traffic of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001. Details regarding the implementation of the Programme of Action were decided at the first Biennial Meeting in July this year. The wish to express our opinion collectively attests to our desire to emphasize again that this problem cannot be resolved separately by any State as a domestic problem. It requires coordinated efforts at borders and at the subregional, regional and global levels.

Without this approach to guide our way, eradicating the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which currently takes half a million lives each year, will remain unrealizable. An example of this approach was the valuable exchange of information and experience that occurred at the first Biennial Meeting, where it was possible to observe that, even though the majority of countries have already started implementing some initiatives, the statistics on the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons remain alarming.

Above and beyond the individual experience that our countries have acquired in updating legislation, adopting new measures or rules, seizing and destroying weapons and strengthening border controls and other types of activities that constitute the first steps necessary for combating this trafficking, the initiatives taken at the subregional level have all been relatively successful. This is demonstrated in the high degree of agreement among the national legislations and border regulations of MERCOSUR and associated countries.

This common legal ground in various areas has made a working group on firearms and ammunitions possible, which has held several meetings evaluating the following: the need to include in national legislation legal aspects mentioned in the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials; a single form to standardize information on the movement of arms and their further monitoring; a draft convention to frame an agreement on the free-flowing transfer of information on the arms registry; and the possible use of the Interpol database of the international system for tracing firearms and explosives.

The network of non-governmental organization (NGOs) created two years ago should also be highlighted. It has become a useful tool for public awareness-raising regarding the dangers of such weapons and their illegal use. In particular, the network has attempted to reverse the so-called "perception of violence", the main characteristics of which include the distorted view of the relationship between crime, insecurity, legitimacy and the acquisition of weapons.

At the same time, all such activities undertaken within MERCOSUR and its associated States are designed to supplement the pioneering activities carried out by our countries, in the context of the Organization of American States, with the adoption of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. That was a demonstration of political will to make room for cooperation in an area vital to the strengthening of individual initiative. As a result, and through agreements established with the United Nations, we have been able to plan or undertake technical assistance and cooperation activities aimed at disseminating information, as well as training and consciousness-raising.

However, despite national, subregional and regional initiatives, the links between terrorism or drug trafficking and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons put the latter in a category that obviously can be fought effectively only through an approach of global cooperation. Such cooperation should have ample resources and spheres of action commensurate with the gravity of the problem.

MERCOSUR's States members and associated States have already committed themselves to continuing to fight this problem in their subregional sphere. But, as we said at the beginning of this statement, if we do not coordinate global activities, there will be no improvement. For example, our countries believe that all activities aimed at tracing arms, identifying illicit trade routes and intermediaries, and locating supply paths are elements that, undertaken at the global level, can begin to correct the current situation. When we say "at the global level", we are referring to State and non-State actors, international and non-governmental organizations and civil society. We believe that the only way to effect change is with everyone's participation, without exception or exclusion.

Ms. Ryan (Norway): Certain conventional weapons have been described as weapons of mass destruction in slow motion. Each year, they are responsible for millions of deaths and injuries. Anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance and the proliferation of illicit small arms pose a challenge to human security — a challenge that must be dealt with in multilateral forums.

We must work to strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons with a new, legally binding protocol on explosive remnants of war. It is to be hoped that the next meeting of the Working Group on Explosive Remnants of War will lead to consensus on a new instrument that will make a real difference and enhance protection of people on the ground.

It is also time to start negotiating on a new protocol dealing with the humanitarian challenges posed by anti-vehicle mines. We are pleased to be a sponsor of the draft resolution on certain conventional weapons, introduced today by the representative of Sweden, and hope that it can be adopted without a vote.

In addition, we need to implement and further enforce the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which is a most urgent and important task. Norway has supported the efforts to establish a new instrument on tracing and marking. Last year, Norway welcomed the French-Swiss initiative; we believe that it provides a number of excellent contributions to the upcoming negotiations on a new instrument.

We have also devoted considerable resources to combating the illicit brokering of small arms. Norway and the Netherlands organized an international conference in April on how to combat such illicit brokering; its results were reported back to the first biennial meeting in New York this past summer. The two Governments are now taking the issue forward under the Dutch-Norwegian initiative on illicit brokering. The main issue here is that only about 20 countries worldwide have legislation that regulates the brokering of small arms. We think that regional organizations should play a crucial role in helping to establish such legislation and in the international cooperation necessary to implement it. We therefore strongly support the resolution proposed by South Africa, Japan and Colombia — particularly the substance of paragraph 10 of that draft resolution.

All three draft resolutions on small arms that are before the Committee enjoy our sponsorship and strong support. However, we would invite the main sponsors to consider whether, in future years, a single resolution might be appropriate for this issue.

Ms. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement just made by the representative of Uruguay, on behalf of

MERCOSUR and its associated States. However, we should like to take this opportunity of interactive dialogue to share with the Committee information on the progress we have made in implementing the Ottawa Convention and in the area of small weapons.

As far as the Ottawa Convention is concerned, Argentina began to destroy its existing stocks of anti-personnel mines this month, with the final ceremony planned for 4 December 2003. The draft resolution on the transparency measures envisaged in the Convention will be implemented under the cooperation and technical assistance agreement signed by the Government of the Argentine Republic and the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States. The agreement was made possible by Canada's financial assistance, and we should like to take this opportunity to thank that country once again.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, a forum entitled "Weapons and a plan of action", was held in Buenos Aires from 30 September to 1 October. It was organized by the Government, with the participation and assistance of non-governmental organizations. The objective of the forum was to analyse the nature of the problem of the illicit trade in weapons; its monitoring; normative aspects of the issue; and questions of supply, demand and transfer, with a view to developing a national plan of action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in firearms. We should indicate that the forum represented the first meeting of representatives from nearly all provincial jurisdictions and Government agencies involved in the issue to design a plan of action aimed at implementing a comprehensive firearms monitoring policy in the country. Among the most relevant activities, emphasis was placed on revising our criminal code, the management of weapons depots, the destruction of decommissioned weapons, the creation of a national registry of decommissioned weapons, as well as the preparation of disarmament campaigns and strengthening monitoring systems.

Mr. Bar (Israel): I would like to make a general statement outlining Israel's position with regard to conventional arms. The First Committee has the task of contributing to international security and arms control. In this regard conventional arms control deserves particular attention by the international community in view of the growing amount of casualties and human suffering caused by misuse and indiscriminate use of conventional weapons.

The history of warfare is one in which tremendous civilian casualties have resulted solely from the use of conventional weapons. Conventional weapons in the hands of terrorists or countries that support terrorists can have a clear strategic impact. It is this history that offers us several important lessons with regard to conventional arms and armaments.

First, armaments in and of themselves do not pose threats: as was aptly stated many years ago "A sword never kills anybody; it is a tool in the killer's hand". The poisonous combination of extensive armaments and hostile intentions is what poses a genuine strategic threat. Israel therefore believes that the best antidote to the threat of armaments is the creation of an environment of confidence and trust.

Secondly, States must bear in mind that the need for armaments is in most cases a direct response to a given situation in which States are compelled to defend and secure their territory. Building trust and confidence in a region will necessarily reduce the need for armaments. When nations live together in a spirit of peace and good neighbourliness, it will be possible to reduce armaments and to increase transparency.

At the same time it is important that arms be controlled and the restraint be instituted so as to create the proper balance between legitimate security needs and the desire to prevent the unnecessary human suffering and loss of innocent life that result from irresponsible policies with respect to conventional arms proliferation. It is for this reason that my Government views the irresponsible use and transfer of conventional arms as a serious threat to regional and global security and stability. The spread of these weapons, or worse their acquisition by terrorists or criminal elements, invariably results in the loss of innocent life. Israel believes that the humanitarian dimension of this problem must remain foremost in our minds and serve to guide our deliberations on this matter.

Israel also believes that the best way to curb illicit arms proliferation throughout the world is through strong national commitment and determination. It is our view that States bear the primary responsibility for ensuring that no weapons are transferred from their territory without proper oversight. States must undertake marking and recording procedures for all weapons, stringent export controls, securing stockpiles and appropriate national

legislation to prevent the misuse and proliferation of arms.

One important way to reduce tensions is through confidence-building measures. These are measures that are mutually agreed upon and whose objective is to enhance a State's sense of security and reduce tensions. In considering such steps, however, we must bear in mind the specific nature of the conflicts, circumstances and threats in different regions. Some measures that are applicable in certain regions and can contribute to stability can have the opposite effect in other regions and could result in a reckless arms race.

In this context it should be noted that confidence-building measures are a means to achieve peace and security. They cannot be considered a reward, as they are an essential element in the embarkation on a process leading to an environment of trust, confidence and peace.

Transparency in armaments can serve as a useful instrument for reducing tensions. We believe that, in principle, the success of transparency is contingent upon the normalization of political and military relations among regional States. Israel is convinced that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is an important instrument and its contribution to regional and global stability and security is without doubt.

Since the inception of the Register, Israel has responded annually with information concerning the seven categories of major battle weapons. We have done so, despite the fact that our region has suffered continuing threats and lack of basic trust between nations. Israel decided to act this way for the purpose of building confidence and reducing the humanitarian impact of the use of conventional arms. We are encouraged by the valid conclusions reached by the Group of Experts regarding the Register, and particularly by the inclusion of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) in this instrument. We hope that this will contribute to better control and restraint on the transfer of this type of weapon.

Unfortunately, there has been no significant development in the Middle East region with regard to wider participation of States in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms or the beginning of a dialogue on regional transparency mechanisms.

Israel supports a gradual transparency process in military affairs, which must begin with regional responses, on a year-by-year basis, to the present United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and then evolve into advanced transparency. Advanced transparency that would encompass military holdings and domestic production capabilities, force projection and force multipliers, as well as advanced hi-tech military technology, can only prove stabilizing, if established as part of a regional security and arms control regime, taking into account national, regional and global security concerns. These should be based on mutually respected principles of reciprocity, comprehensiveness, openness and normalization in political and military relations. We hope that other countries will join us in participating in this instrument with a view towards its universal application.

Illicit proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons has affected many societies worldwide, causing suffering primarily to civilian populations, who must pay a high price. This phenomenon exacerbates internal conflicts, thereby increasing human suffering and threatening peace and security. Not only does it generate humanitarian problems but it also has a considerable impact upon all levels of society, be it economic or social. We therefore view the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms as timely and important.

Over the years, the international debate and initiatives related to small arms and light weapons have raised public awareness of the humanitarian problems caused by these weapons. This debate has also helped define and clarify different aspects of the issue.

Israel believes that small arms and light weapons must be controlled and restraints instituted, but in a way that takes into account legitimate security needs and at the same time preventing unnecessary human suffering and the loss of innocent life. We are certain that for many States the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms is not merely another theoretical exercise but rather a daily practice.

Israel shares the concern of the international community for the humanitarian cost of the irresponsible use and transfer of small arms and light weapons and has taken steps to curb their proliferation. Israel actively participated in the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and calls on all States

to implement the provisions of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms. Israel warmly welcomes the Programme of Action in the sincere hope that it will contribute to human security and peace. We would like to add our name to the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47, which promotes the implementation of the Programme of Action on a regional level.

Israeli civilians have been particularly vulnerable to the effects of the illicit transfer and use of small arms and light weapons. The terrorist attack in Mombasa, Kenya at the end of November 2002, where anti-aircraft missiles were fired at an Israeli civilian aircraft carrying more than a hundred passengers, highlights the problem of man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) falling into the wrong hands, especially those of terrorists. There must be safeguards to ensure that these weapons are not supplied to clients that may transfer them to terrorists. For Israel, as well as for other States in our region and the international community, the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action has become even more relevant.

It is precisely the failure of some of our neighbours to control the flow of arms to and from the territory under their control and collect illegal arms from terrorist groups, that constitutes the major obstacle to implementation of the road map back to peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

The continuation of the smuggling of arms, the extensive circulation of illicit small arms and light weapons and the extensive clandestine production of explosives and rockets have a devastating effect on our region and obliges Israel to take the necessary measures to protect itself and makes progress in the peace process impossible. Firm determination should be demonstrated by all in this regard. What is the contribution of the international community if we turn a blind eye to the continuation of illegal arms trafficking to terrorist groups?

Israel attaches particular importance to action aimed at preventing and minimizing the human suffering resulting from the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. Israel believes that an integral component in the effort to address this threat is cooperation. Cooperative initiatives in the areas of mine clearance, mine awareness and victim rehabilitation are of tremendous importance and contribute greatly to efforts aimed at alleviating the humanitarian problems associated with landmines.

Israel has taken a number of unilateral steps as well, including ceasing all production of anti-personnel landmines, declaring a moratorium on the export of all types of anti-personnel mines and ratifying the amended Protocol II annexed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Israel hopes that other nations in the region will join with it in establishing cooperative mechanisms aimed at reducing that threat, preferably within the context of a comprehensive regional peace.

As a High Contracting Party to the CCW, we see the Convention as a good example of how States can act to restrain the use of arms while not causing harm to their vital national security interests. Israel is participating in the current negotiations on an international instrument on explosive remnants of war with a view to reducing their humanitarian effects in post-conflict situations. Israel can contribute to this joint endeavour towards finding the proper balance between the legitimate security needs of States and our moral imperative to reduce human suffering.

Although Israel shares the humanitarian objectives of the Ottawa Convention, due to regional circumstances and the continued threat of terrorism, it cannot commit itself to a total ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines. We have, however, taken part in several international initiatives aimed at promoting mine awareness and support for victims of these terrible weapons.

Finally, it is our common objective to achieve peace and security and we all hope to come to an era where "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks". This vision unfortunately, is yet to be achieved by those who seek to live in peace and security as it is underscored by the growing threat of terrorism. The loss of innocent life is always painful. Terrorism does not distinguish among its victims. All of us are threatened by this phenomenon and all of us have a responsibility to stop it. We repeat our call to our neighbours and other States to cease all support for the perpetrators of such crimes, including supplying them with weapons and explosives. Terrorism, after all, is only viable if countries allow, and even support its fortification through weapons transfers.

We therefore hope that the international community will consolidate its efforts towards ensuring the compliance of States with their international obligations. The fundamental commitment of States to resolve disputes peacefully, to cease support for terrorism, and to live peacefully within secure boundaries can lay the foundation for future disarmament of conventional arms.

Mr. Durrani (Pakistan): On behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey and my own delegation, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.9, entitled "Regional disarmament".

International security and disarmament need to be pursued both at the international and regional levels. While international disarmament measures are vital, in most instances security and disarmament can be most effectively promoted at the regional level.

The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.9 notes that the guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security were adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1993. Those guidelines remain relevant in the present day to promote regional disarmament in the conventional and non-conventional fields.

It is now evident that in most of the areas of tension and potential conflict, including the Middle East, South Asia, North-East Asia and Central Asia, the regional approach could offer a most effective basis to promote disarmament and enhance security.

The draft resolution notes the recent proposals for disarmament at the regional and subregional levels and expresses the conviction that endeavours to promote regional disarmament, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region, and in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, enhances the security of all States.

The draft resolution therefore stresses the need for sustained efforts, affirms that regional approaches to disarmament complement each other and calls on States to conclude agreements wherever possible. It welcomes initiatives towards disarmament, non-proliferation and security undertaken by some countries at the regional and subregional levels and supports and encourages confidence-building measures.

Adoption of this draft resolution will encourage the concerned countries to pursue endeavours for regional disarmament and will help to strengthen regional and international security. The sponsors hope that, as was done last year, the draft resolution on regional disarmament will be adopted without a vote.

I would also like to briefly introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.10, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Germany, Nepal, Peru, Spain, the Netherlands and my own delegation.

This draft resolution aims to promote disarmament endeavours in an area which so far has not received due recognition in international disarmament forums — the pursuit of conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels. The draft resolution outlines in its preamble several vital principles and precepts relating to the issue. These include the points that the crucial role of arms control in peace and security, threats to peace in the post-cold war era arise mainly among States located in the same region, or subregion; that the preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments would contribute to peace and stability; that agreements to strengthen peace and security at the lowest possible level of disarmament and military forces is a desirable objective; that militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting such agreements for regional peace and security; and that an important objective should be to prevent the possibility of military attack launched by surprise, and to avoid aggression.

The preamble of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/68/L.10 also notes with particular interest the initiatives in various regions, including in a number of Latin American countries, and the proposals for conventional arms control in South Asia. It recognizes the relevance and value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is described as a cornerstone of European security.

The operative part of the draft resolution decides to give urgent consideration to the issue of conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels and requests the Conference on

Disarmament to consider formulating principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements. It also request the Secretary-General to seek the views of the Member States and to submit a report to the next session of the General Assembly.

The sponsors express the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without objection.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I can assure you of our full support and cooperation. As in previous years, Lithuania is a sponsor of the draft resolutions on the Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons and on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel mines and on their Destruction.

Allow me briefly to address issues under agenda items 73 (v) and 77. The Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) are an essential part of international humanitarian law, and Lithuania attaches great importance to it. We are concerned by the serious humanitarian impact of explosive remnants of war since acute problems arising from explosive remnants of war contamination have not been limited to zones of recent conflicts. The problem is much wider and exists in areas of conflicts fought long ago. If the issue of residual explosive remnants of war is to be solved, there needs to be an international legal norm and an effective framework mechanism for assistance and the exchange of information and technologies. We urge the elaboration of legally binding protocols for both explosive remnants of war and landmines other than anti-personnel mines, as well as a mechanism for verification of compliance covering the entire CCW.

Promoting the universality of the CCW, along with its additional protocols, should be high on the international agenda. Last February, Lithuania ratified the amendment to article 1 of the CCW and we call on other countries do likewise. Concerned at the severe impact on civil society caused by anti-personnel landmines and unexploded remnants of war throughout the world, Lithuania strongly supports international mine action and the strengthening of the international legal framework to mitigate the consequences of war and civil conflicts.

In light of that, Lithuania views the work being done in the framework of the Ottawa Convention and the CCW. Earlier this year, Lithuania was one of the first of its region to ratify the Ottawa Convention. Yet, even prior to our ratification, we had committed ourselves to fully implementing all provisions of the treaty. Its agreement relative to article 7 on transparency measures, has been submitted on a voluntary basis. We note with particular satisfaction that the number of States parties to the Ottawa Convention is increasing and that many of the recent ratifications have come from our region.

In the lead-up to the Convention's first review conference, in 2004, we feel it is increasingly important to seek various ways in which to contribute to the universalization, effective implementation of and compliance with the Treaty and to contribute to its core humanitarian aims. Making full use of the regional potential in this field and setting the stage for regional cooperation may require finding common ground among the different perceptions and experiences by means of confidence-building and transparency measures. Thus, next year, Lithuania plans to host a regional seminar, which we believe will be an important contribution to pursuing the goals of the Ottawa Convention.

Mr. Varma (India): We wish to speak in support of the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/58/L.1, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

As we indicated in our previous statements, we remain committed to an active, constructive engagement for the timely implementation of the programme of action to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Ambassador Rakesh Sood of India chaired the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to resolution 56/24 V, which recommended a decision to negotiate under the aegis of the United Nations an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace in a timely manner small arms and light weapons. We expressed the hope that during our deliberations no effort would be spared to maintain the momentum generated by the substantive consensus reflected in the work of the Group.

We would like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to all those delegations which have specifically mentioned in

their statements or have made known their positions in support of the role played by India, in particular by Ambassador Sood. Many delegations noted his great diplomatic skill in guiding the work of the Group to achieve the substantive consensus that was finally brought about. We believe that we should build on that substantive consensus, including through the establishment of the Working Group, which will hold its organizational session in New York in February next year. This is indeed an important step in carrying forward the process.

Given the positive response and support that has been extended to the role played by India, we in turn are prepared to express our readiness to continue to contribute to those efforts in the same manner as we did with respect to the Working Group established pursuant to resolution 56/24 V.

The Chairman: The Committee has been proceeding rather smoothly so far with the second phase of its work. Consequently, it is my intention — subject to the consent of the Committee — to cancel the meeting scheduled for the afternoon of Friday, 24 October, and to release the facilities allocated to the Committee for other purposes. Tomorrow, we will discuss all the items scheduled for Friday.

May I take it that, in the absence of objection, the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to make an announcement.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that the following countries have joined as sponsors of the following draft resolutions — A/C.1/58/L.1: Austria, Bolivia, Grenada, Latvia, Mongolia and the Republic of Moldova; A/C.1/58/L.9: Turkey; A/C.1/58/L.10: Italy; A/C.1/58/L.11, L.12, L.13, L.19, L.26 and L.27: the Republic of the Congo; A/C.1/58/L.16: Ukraine; A/C.1/58/L.17, L.32 and L.50: the Republic of Moldova; A/C.1/58/L.21: Fiji, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea; L.31: Ghana; A/C.1/58/L.35: Armenia and Myanmar; A/C.1/58/L.36: Myanmar; A/C.1/58/L.38: Thailand; A/C.1/58/L.39: Paraguay; A/C.1/58/L.40: Austria, Costa Rica and Paraguay; A/C.1/58/L.42: Austria; A/C.1/58/L.43: Albania, Belize, Cape Verde, Chad, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; A/C.1/58/L.45: Ghana, Thailand and the Republic of Moldova; A/C.1/5 8/L.46: Norway, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, San Marino and Ukraine; A/C.1/58/L.51: Spain; A/C.1/58/L.52: Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Tuvalu and Vanuatu; and A/C.1/58/L.53 Tuvalu.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/58/PV.14

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-eighth session

First Committee

14th meeting

Thursday, 23 October 2003, at 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Sareva ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 62 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: Delegations are invited today to make statements on regional disarmament, confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments, and other disarmament measures and disarmament machinery. They are also invited to continue introducing draft resolutions.

As I indicated yesterday, should time so allow, I would also invite delegations to make statements and introduce draft resolutions under the two subjects slated for tomorrow, first, related matters of disarmament and international security and, secondly, international security.

Ms. Rastovac (Serbia and Montenegro): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your flexibility in allowing me to take the floor on the agenda item on conventional weapons. I would like also to thank the distinguished representative from the Netherlands delegation.

In their statements made yesterday, many representatives pointed to the problem of small arms and light weapons and various ways of dealing with it. I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of the current activities undertaken in Serbia and Montenegro to destroy the stockpiles of these types of weapons.

On the basis of an agreement between the Ministry of Defence of Serbia and Montenegro and NATO's Maintenance and Supply Agency, as project coordinator, the process of destruction of 23,223 pieces of arms was initiated on 16 October 2003 in the Cacak technical overhaul facility. The price of the project is estimated at €285,000. We would like to express our appreciation to the Netherlands, which will bear a major portion of the cost, and to all other countries that have contributed to this effort.

Another initiative related to the destruction of small arms is being carried out in cooperation with the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Earlier in October this year, in the Smederevo industrial facility, US Steel Sartid, as many as 7,335 pieces of arms were destroyed. The operational costs were covered by the United States Government, for which we are grateful. It is anticipated that an additional 10,000 pieces will be destroyed in the near future, also with the assistance of the United States Government.

Despite the efforts undertaken within the region on disarmament, especially in the field of small arms and light weapons, we have to reiterate that the problem of small arms and lights weapons still pose a threat to the security of our country and the region at large. This problem is particularly pronounced in the province of Kosovo-Metohija, where, according to the report commissioned by the United Nations

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Development Programme (UNDP), there are between 330,000 and 460,000 illegal and unregistered firearms.

Another problem is the illicit trade in these weapons originating from this province of Serbia and Montenegro, due to inadequate border control, for which international presences are currently responsible. We therefore call upon the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force to take additional measures to put an end to the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons within the province and to prevent their spillover to other parts of the region.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I should like to introduce two draft resolutions this morning. The first, draft resolution, A/C.1/58/L.45, is on transparency in armaments; the second, draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.16, is on national legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology.

It is my honour to present to the Committee, on behalf of its more than 100 sponsors, the annual resolution on transparency in armaments, document A/C.1/58/L.45.

It is a good thing that we are looking critically this year at the relevance of the work we are doing here. The items under discussion in the First Committee should reflect our most serious and topical disarmament concerns. The question is, do they? Of course, now is not the time to reopen that debate. But let me just say that, apart from a number of items whose relevance has diminished, there are issues already before us that are quite urgent.

Consider yesterday's issue of *The New York Times*, which ran a front-page article on steps to be taken against the danger of shoulder-fired missiles. We call them MANPADS, or man-portable air defence systems, and they are among the most serious threats to security around the world. These deadly weapons — which are capable of bringing down large passenger aircraft — sell for as little as $5,000 and are known to be in the hands of terrorists. There are tens of thousands of them on the international market. And, once they are in the wrong hands, they are a threat to all of our societies.

This year, we broadened the scope of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We agreed on including smaller artillery systems and MANPADS, to which I just referred. It was the first time since the instrument's establishment that agreement had been reached on significant technical adjustments to its categories. How important is that? Its importance might be twofold — first, because the inclusion of these weapons in the scope of the Register means a broadening of transparency; and secondly, because it shows that we can still take significant steps in the field of arms control. It is encouraging to see that real progress in the field of disarmament can still be made.

I singled out MANPADS, but they are just one example of the relevance of the concept of transparency in armaments in general. That concept is one of the major confidence-building principles among States, enabling the international community to be better informed about military matters and developments. Transparency in armaments thus diminishes misperceptions and helps to prevent information from being distorted. The instrument has developed steadily over the years. Increased participation by States demonstrates growing confidence that transparency can help to prevent the excessive accumulation of arms by also encouraging self-restraint in the military production and transfer of arms.

The growing confidence in the United Nations Register is evident from the upward reporting trend. So far this year, 118 Member States have submitted their reports for 2002. Four new Member States have joined this global reporting instrument for the first time. I should like to congratulate the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Laos and Timor-Leste for joining the Register. A record 164 Member States have now participated at least once in the Register since 1992. Of course, it remains crucial that all of us continue our participation in the coming years.

States that have reported in previous years but not yet this year can still submit their reports to the Secretariat. I would also urge the countries that have submitted a report only once or a few times to participate on a consistent basis. Consistency would significantly heighten the level of participation and thereby the quality and significance of this confidence-building measure. Participation includes so-called nil reports confirming that no transfers took place during the calendar year.

Furthermore, let me express appreciation to the Governments of Canada, Germany and Japan for joining the Netherlands in sponsoring a number of

workshops during the past year devoted to United Nations transparency instruments in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Now is also an appropriate time to again express our sincere appreciation to the secretariat of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, in particular Mr. Nazir Kamal, for its efforts in compiling and publishing the Register and assisting Member States in submitting their reports.

The Register has established a de facto norm for transparency in armaments, which Governments must take into account. It provides a significant amount of information, officially reported by Governments, that would not otherwise be available. The Register is important for regional and interregional consultations between Governments, but it also plays an important role in public information, promoting accountability on the part of political and military leaders. Moreover, the Register has spurred many Governments to improve their national systems for monitoring and controlling arms transfers.

All this year's good news notwithstanding, we are still far from true universal participation in the instrument. In that context, it is important to note that the concept of transparency in armaments is certainly not restricted to conventional armaments. The desirability of transparency applies as much to weapons of mass destruction as to conventional weapons. So it is a good thing that multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction provide for their own mechanisms to ensure transparency.

We are encouraged by the constructive dialogue that we have developed with countries that are not yet in a position to participate in the Register and cannot yet give their support to this draft resolution. We shall continue to work with them. Therefore, I sincerely hope that the Committee will continue to broadly support the draft resolution on transparency in armaments in general and to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in particular — especially since, in my opinion, it is a fine example of the relevance that the First Committee can have for today's global security challenges.

I should now like to introduce document A/C.1/58/L.16, the second draft resolution sponsored by the Netherlands, on national legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology.

The Netherlands submitted this draft resolution for the first time last year, when it was adopted with the largest possible majority; there were only votes in favour. We believe the draft resolution is important because it recognizes the importance of Member States having effective legislation to control what transfers take place and the movement of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology into or out of their territories. We are convinced that every Member State, in the exercise of its own sovereignty, would want to enact such control over its own territory.

The draft resolution invites Member States that are in a position to do so to enact or improve such legislation and to inform the Secretary-General of such legislation on a voluntary basis. In its preambular part, the draft resolution also recalls the importance of facilitating the exchange of materials, equipment and technological information for peaceful purposes among the parties to relevant disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.

I seem to have a certain reputation for transparency and therefore I would like to explain here in the plenary session the changes that I made to the draft resolution this year. Before the resolution on this subject was adopted last year, there was a separate vote on a sub-sentence of the previous second preambular paragraph, in which a reference was made to transfers that could contribute to proliferation activities. A number of Member States at that time abstained on this part of the second preambular paragraph.

As I said, we have now modified the text of this draft resolution to take into account the concerns expressed by these Member States. The reference to proliferation activities is now part of a new second preambular paragraph, which deals with the importance of national controls over transfers. We say in the new text that national control over transfers includes those transfers that could contribute to proliferation activities. We feel this wording is appropriate because, besides proliferation activities, there are also other reasons for establishing national controls over the transfer of arms and military equipment.

A new third preambular paragraph now deals exclusively with exchanges for peaceful purposes.

After consultations with a number of Member States, we will make a small amendment to the second preambular paragraph, replacing the first word, "convinced", by the word "recalling", the same word

used at the beginning of the third preambular paragraph.

I wanted to make this explanation, as I said, in this meeting because I think it is important, and I sincerely hope that these changes to last year's text will enable the Committee to adopt this important draft resolution without a vote.

Mrs. Bonnier (Sweden): First of all, let me thank the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands for introducing the draft resolution in document A/C.1/58/L.45, on transparency in armaments. Let me also express Sweden's appreciation of the continuous efforts undertaken by the Netherlands on this important issue. Sweden fully supports the draft resolution on transparency and armaments and is a sponsor of the draft, as it has been in the past. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted this year without a vote.

While I have the floor, I would also like to express our appreciation to the distinguished Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina for the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Sweden welcomes this year's highly successful review of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, a milestone, we would say, in the Register's 11-year history. Sweden looks forward to a further development of the parameters of the Register.

As far as small arms and the seventh category of the Register are concerned, there is still room for improvement. To this end, Sweden is committed to working actively towards the development of elaborated reporting provisions and thereby enhanced transparency, which was indeed one of the main objectives for establishing the Register in the first place. The need for transparency has never been greater and has increased rather than diminished since the Register was established.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is submitting a draft resolution for the consideration of the First Committee under item 68 of the agenda, which is entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" and contained in document A/C.1/58/L.3.

The rapid innovations in information technology and systems and their application in all spheres of human activity open up unprecedented possibilities for development. Information resources are becoming a more and more valuable element of both nations' and mankind's assets.

In today's world, States depend increasingly on information and telecommunication technology. The issue of the potential use of that technology for purposes that are incompatible with the maintenance of international stability is directly linked to the issue of safeguarding the political and military security of all States. Information technology is a critically important aspect of the national security of States, as well as an element of the overall system of international security.

States have recognized the importance of examining the issue of information security at the international level and the importance of a common approach by the entire international community to the common objective of that exercise. This recognition is reflected in the adoption by consensus in the General Assembly of the five previous resolutions on this issue.

The Secretary-General's report, entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", contained in document A/58/373, contains a number of new national points of view and assessments which complement in a significant way those viewpoints and assessments that were submitted earlier by Member States.

In the draft resolution we now submit, it is proposed that a working group of national experts be set up in 2004 that would be tasked with reviewing existing and potential threats to information technology and examining potential joint measures to counteract those threats. The working group would also explore international conceptual frameworks aimed at enhancing global security for information and telecommunication systems and prepare the Secretary-General's report on the results of that work for presentation to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

Russia's view of the discussion on information technology in the Group of Governmental Experts is given in the Secretary-General's report in document A/58/373. We believe it would be appropriate to focus first on issues where there is consensus, in particular, the development of a common conceptual framework and the definition and classification of threats and possible means to counteract them.

The draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation to the fifty-eighth General Assembly (A/C.1/58/L.3) contains no fundamental changes from the resolution that was adopted without a vote at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, with the exception of some technical clarifications. I therefore urge delegations to support the Russian draft resolution, and our hope is that, as in previous years, it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Pant (Nepal): My delegation has asked for the floor on behalf of some 30 sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.21, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific", which we are introducing under agenda item 74 (e).

Following consultations with the sponsors, some technical modifications have been introduced in the text of this year's draft resolution to bring it in line with the Secretary-General's report on the Centre (A/58/190). As in the past, operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution would reiterate the wish of the sponsors to ensure the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu within six months of the date of signature of the host country agreement. In that context, may I inform the Committee that Nepal's commitment to the Centre is unwavering and His Majesty's Government is prepared to provide the necessary support to operate the Centre from Kathmandu.

In our recent discussions with the Secretariat, we have unequivocally communicated Nepal's offer to sign a separate memorandum with sunset provisions in order to address the concerns regarding the security-related costs of the Centre. As a prelude to this, the Secretariat has also been urged to quickly revise the host country agreement and the memorandum of understanding, in accordance with diplomatic practices and precedents. We are now looking forward to a positive response from the Secretariat so that the Kathmandu process may move forward without further interruption.

The sponsors of the draft resolution are confident that the Centre will continue to play a significant role in building confidence among nations in the region, as well as function as an effective tool for disarmament and arms control.

In conclusion, my delegation, on behalf of the sponsors, would like to appeal to all Member States to adopt the draft resolution as in previous years, without a vote.

Before closing, I wish to draw the Committee's attention to the fifth and seventh preambular paragraphs, in order to insert some minor technical and editorial modifications. In the fifth preambular paragraph, which lists the countries where regional conferences and workshops were held last year from September onward, in the second line, insert after the word "held", the words "in summer, Republic of Uzbekistan, from 25 to 28 September 2002", and delete the word "on", which is now irrelevant. Also, in the fifth line of the seventh preambular paragraph, after the words "organization of", retain the word "an" and delete the word "a", which is redundant.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): My delegation believes that an integrated approach to addressing regional security concerns is an important element of maintaining the peace and security of any given region. In that regard, we reaffirm the crucial role that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific plays in fostering an environment of cooperation and exchange within our own region. The Republic of Korea supports the efforts of the Regional Centre and highly values the Kathmandu process as a useful vehicle for the promotion of dialogue on regional security and disarmament issues. Highly appreciating the Nepalese Government's strong commitment to the Centre, we will continue to extend our political and financial support for the Regional Centre in order to strengthen its programmes and activities.

Recognizing the useful role of the Regional Centre in assisting the region-specific initiatives of Member States, my delegation takes the opportunity to announce that the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the Centre, will host a conference entitled, "Global non-proliferation regime in a changing security environment" on Jeju Island, South Korea, from 3 to 5 December this year. The issues to be addressed include the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as missile and verification measures.

Ms. Tasneem (Bangladesh): I take the floor to express the full support of my delegation to draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.21, introduced by the delegate of Nepal. Bangladesh has been a traditional sponsor of

this resolution, and hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

The importance of regional approaches to disarmament and confidence-building measures in enhancing regional security and addressing region-specific problems cannot be overemphasized. The continued arms race, particularly in nuclear weapons in various regions of the world, including in South Asia, remains a formidable threat to regional peace and security. It drains considerable resources at the cost of economic and social development of the people of the region. In that context, we would like to reaffirm that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific serves as an important forum for fostering a climate of cooperation for peace and disarmament in the region. The unhindered progress of the Kathmandu process is critical in promoting dialogue, transparency and confidence-building on specific region-wide security concerns through the organization of regional meetings and dialogue.

Two important preconditions for the effective and meaningful functioning of the Centre are the continued financial and institutional support in strengthening its activities and its full-fledged operation from Kathmandu instead of New York. Bangladesh calls upon all concerned, including Member States and other interested institutions, to sustain and, if possible, enhance their voluntary contributions to support the activities of the Centre. In that regard, we appreciate the valuable overall support provided by the Government of Nepal as the host nation to the Regional Centre. We hope for the early conclusion of a host country agreement and a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Government of Nepal, pursuant to resolution 57/92 (2002).

We welcome the recent initiatives undertaken by the Government of Nepal to address the security concerns of the Secretariat. We join the voice of Nepal in urging the Secretariat to revise the necessary instruments as per relevant international diplomatic practices and precedents. I would like to conclude, therefore, by calling upon the Secretariat to do all that is needed to ensure the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu, enabling it to function more effectively from within the Asia-Pacific Region, where it belongs, thereby contributing to the revitalization of the Kathmandu process.

Mr. Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour for me to take the floor on behalf of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.7, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean". The text of the draft resolution is the result of a joint, coordinated effort by all the countries of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. The close coordination among all the sponsors shows the great interest of our region in the United Nations Regional Centre, headquartered in Lima, Peru.

Let me briefly highlight a few aspects of our draft resolution. The draft resolution does not contain any major changes this year. Apart from the usual changes required to update it, however, we have introduced new ideas that I wish to emphasize.

First, in the fifth preambular paragraph, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/122), which concludes that the Regional Centre also acts as a facilitator for the implementation of regional initiatives by identifying regional security needs and new areas of cooperation with States and organizations in the region.

Secondly, in the sixth preambular paragraph, we refer to the Centre's initiating a new level of activity in the important area of disarmament and development, and we encourage the Centre to further develop that activity.

Thirdly, in the eighth preambular paragraph, we note with satisfaction the holding of the next General Conference of the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, on 5 and 6 November 2003 in Cuba. At that meeting, we shall officially recognize the fact that the Treaty of Tlatelolco is now in force for all the States of Latin American and the Caribbean, making our region the first inhabited nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In operative paragraph 6, we welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts, which will prepare a report on the relationship between disarmament and development, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/65. That report will be of the utmost interest for the role the Regional Centre plays in promoting those issues in the region in pursuit of its mandate to promote economic and social development related to peace and disarmament.

We believe that we have achieved a balanced draft resolution, with all the necessary fundamental elements, which expresses the firm support of our countries for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the Latin and Caribbean Group, as is customary, we hope that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Heinsberg (Germany): I should like to introduce draft decision A/C.1/58/L.17, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", and draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.32, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".

As far as draft decision A/C.1/58/L.17 is concerned, I should like to point out that, since 1997, Germany has annually submitted a draft resolution by that title. The draft resolution on consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures has enjoyed growing support among Member States; last year, it was sponsored by more than 100 delegations from all regional groups.

The concept of practical disarmament measures seems to receive continuous attention. We see it as an obligation to carry on the task of promoting practical disarmament measures. Germany feels that it can serve as a valuable tool to implement, to no small degree, the programme of action that is part of the small arms report of July 2001.

With the decision to move to biennialization of the draft resolution, Germany wants to respond to the fact that this subject's operative aspects call much more for practical measures than for political discussions. Such discussions are indeed crucial, and the First Committee remains an important forum for delegations to present their case. We feel, however, that politically contentious issues deserve more time than issues like ours, which are of a rather technical or operative nature. We do not believe that biennialization reflects in any way on the subject's importance.

Germany will — independently of the frequency with which the draft resolution is submitted — remain committed to the promotion of practical disarmament projects. By chairing the group of interested States for practical disarmament measures, Germany is making an effort to actively contribute in that field. A number of smaller projects have been conducted and completed successfully, and a larger project on disarmament education is under way.

I do not wish to hide from the Committee the fact that more active donor involvement would be very welcome, but — as past experience has shown — such involvement cannot be instigated through resolutions. Germany is determined to develop a strategy to reinvigorate the group and to work towards a better understanding of the potential of practical disarmament. I trust that Member States — especially the delegations that have actively endorsed the draft resolution in the past – understand the rationale of our decision and will agree with the approach taken. I can assure the Committee that, during the next session of the General Assembly, as in the previous session, Germany will submit the draft resolution.

I should now like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.32, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures". I should like to take this opportunity to thank all delegations that contributed actively to the further development of the draft resolution during the past weeks. I should also like to thank all nations that sponsored the draft resolution this year; they have brought the number of sponsors to more than 70 nations so far. In addition, I should like to encourage the delegations that are still considering sponsoring the draft resolution to do so.

The German-Romanian biennial draft resolution now before members is a follow-up to the 2001 version. It was slightly reshaped for better understanding and a more logical flow of statements and recommendations. It again encourages Member States having no information to submit nil reports. That would further increase participation, with a view to achieving the goal of universalization. Germany would like to appeal to all countries that have not yet participated to join the instrument by submitting information next year.

I should now like to make some general remarks on the operational side of this draft resolution. Significant progress was recorded this year in the level of participation by Governments in the two global arms transparency instruments maintained and operated by the United Nations Secretariat: the Register of Conventional Arms and the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, which are based on the Dutch and the German-Romanian resolutions,

respectively. It is encouraging that the number of new participants in the two arms transparency instruments continues to grow, registering significant increases over the past two years.

A promising upturn and a record number of submissions by Governments have been recorded for the United Nations system for standardized reporting of military expenditures. The United Nations Secretariat has received submissions from 74 Governments so far this year. I wish to mention the Governments of certain countries — without specifically naming all of them — that participated in the United Nations system for standardized reporting of military expenditures for the first time by making a submission in 2003. The standardized reporting format covers expenditures on personnel, operations and maintenance, procurement and construction, and research and development. So far, more than 115 Governments have participated in the military expenditure instrument one or more times. Together, those Governments constitute approximately 80 per cent of global military expenditures. Sustained effort is being made by the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs to increase familiarity with the procedures of these instruments with a view to encouraging greater and more consistent participation.

A series of regional and subregional workshops was conducted with the assistance of interested Governments in 2002 and early 2003 for Latin America, Western and Southern Africa, together with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Netherlands, Canada, Japan and Germany. These efforts have to enhance and sustain the progress of the global transparency instruments towards fulfilling their respective confidence-building and arms restraint objectives.

We would therefore welcome support from other interested Governments for sponsoring these activities to advance the objectives of arms transparency. I also appeal to those that have participated only once or a few times to participate on a consistent basis. Consistency alone will significantly raise the level of participation each year, thereby contributing to the common goal of transparency. I would like to conclude with the hope that the resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

The President: At this stage I would like to inform the Committee that we currently have twenty-three more speakers on today's list.

Mr. Suseanu (Romania): I will try to be very brief. I take the floor in support of the draft resolution entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures" (A/C.1/58/L.32).

Seventy-four countries have provided national reports this year on their military expenditures and on the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters. It is a positive step forward and an improvement in comparison with the previous years.

The draft resolution, which is now submitted every two years by Germany and Romania, forms a good basis for promoting further openness and transparency in all military matters. At the same time, it has become an important and useful element for building trust and confidence between States worldwide.

Transparency in military expenditures can really help relieve regional tensions and, from that perspective, is an important contribution to conflict prevention. Seventy-two countries have sponsored the draft resolution so far this year. We hope that the broad participation of States in the United Nations standardized reporting system of military expenditure will be further improved. Therefore, we encourage Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their reports on ways to strengthen and broaden participation in the United Nations reporting system and hope that the draft resolution will be adopted again without a vote.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): The credibility and effectiveness of multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regimes is closely linked to the compliance records of the States parties to these regimes. This fact has never been more clearly displayed than today, when some of these regimes face major crises of compliance.

Verification of compliance provides confidence among parties to a regime that negotiated obligations are being fulfilled and, therefore, real security benefits will be realized. Absence of sound, well-established and broadly agreed compliance and verification measures, by contrast, makes analysing and resolving crises that much more difficult. While a presumption of good faith on the part of those entering into binding commitments remains at the core of international

security cooperation, effective verification also remains a critical element of the security cooperation equation.

The United Nations General Assembly has long been supportive of the role that verification can play in international security accords, especially in the realm of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament My delegation has routinely submitted to this Committee a biennial draft resolution entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", affirming the so-called Sixteen Verification Principles, which were first endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-third session in 1988. These Principles remain valid. and I commend them to you again.

At the same time, and in the spirit of reviewing and rationalizing our working methods, Canada has decided not to introduce this draft resolution again in its current form, but rather to use this thematic session to initiate an exchange of views on the challenges faced in realizing long-standing verification goals under the current circumstances and how we might improve our collective capacity to verify and promote compliance with multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements.

In our view, a substantive discussion of the compliance and verification issue and the consideration of options for improving performance in this field would be a more valuable outcome of this year's First Committee session than the adoption of a general expression of principles that has not changed in over a decade. On the basis of such a discussion, future action may suggest itself, including the possibility of ongoing informal exchanges over the coming year and the submission of a modified draft resolution on the subject.

We have thus submitted a draft decision, and here I confess, Mr. Chairman, our own verification procedures have fallen short and a typographical error has inserted itself: the document is A/C.1/58/L.48 instead of A/C.1/58/L.49. This is a way of having this item inscribed on our agenda next year, with a view to using the coming year to reflect on this important issue. We hope the decision will be adopted by consensus.

As an initial contribution to such an exchange of views, my delegation has the following reflections and ideas to offer. They are informed by the Sixteen Verification Principles, but try to expand their focus, apply them to the current environment and generate some practical suggestions.

First, we should make maximum use of existing machinery. We have elaborate verification procedures in many non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements, and in the case of several of the most important, dedicated international organizations to carry out this work. We should strive to ensure that these organizations are provided with the means and assistance to fulfil their mandates. In addition, States parties should be encouraged to adopt the highest standards of demonstrating their compliance with undertakings and in facilitating the verification tasks of the concerned agencies where such standards and arrangements have been promulgated. The Additional Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a good example in this regard. Broadly, we should also be working to universalize adherence to verification and compliance measures as part of universalizing the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regime as a whole.

Secondly, we should seek ways to strengthen the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regime. Some parts of our multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament treaty system, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention, have strong verification mechanisms, while others, such as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, do not. A similarly wide variation exists in provisions for mechanisms to judge and deal with cases of non-compliance. We should seek productive ways to cooperate in strengthening verification and compliance mechanisms within existing treaties and to ensure that strong measures of this nature are included in newly negotiated instruments as well.

Thirdly, we should ensure that the means of verification keep up with technological developments. Despite all our best efforts, the arms race broadly continues, the evolution of weapons systems constantly challenging verification systems. Fortunately, in a balancing manner, our scientists and engineers continue to develop new means of verification, including both detection and data analysis. The International Monitoring System of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and studies by various groups on the application of satellite-based

remote sensing are but two good examples. However, more could and should be done to ensure that such ongoing advances in verification technology are actually applied as part of the multilateral resolution of compliance issues.

Fourthly, we should review the role of the Security Council. In some of the major multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament treaties, such as the NPT, the Security Council holds the ultimate responsibility in cases of non-compliance. It would be helpful to consider the role the Security Council can play in a variety of scenarios involving both formal references under such treaties and other references under the rubric of threats to international peace and security. If we place the Council in this position, it is important that appropriate action be forthcoming, and more work needs to be done to examine the political space between treaty regimes and Security Council responsibilities. A few preliminary questions arise. For example, should there be a set time frame for responding to referrals to the Council by treaty organizations? Is there a need for new "rules of the road" to clarify situations where treaty-based verification and compliance efforts have been exhausted and Security Council roles and responsibilities are unclear? Would it be useful to enhance the practical ability of the Security Council to deploy its own fact-finding or investigative teams at short notice?

Fifthly, the role of the Secretary General and Secretariat should be reviewed. Many nuclear non-proliferation and arms control and disarmament instruments, treaty-based and otherwise, lack verification procedures. At the same time, Verification Principle 8 speaks to the need to ensure that, where verification systems do exist, they are reviewed and evaluated in light of experience. In these two respects, are there areas of monitoring or verification of international non-proliferation and arms control and disarmament accords that might be conferred on the Secretary General? Should we be examining means of developing a capacity within the Secretariat to monitor and assist in the verification of commitments in those areas not covered by existing organizations? Could the Secretary-General provide an impartial third-party verification service to States party to bilateral or plurilateral agreements without such integral provisions? Should, as some States have suggested, the specialized expertise and capabilities that have been built up by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) be retained by the United Nations as an internal capacity, perhaps in the form of designated posts within the Department for Disarmament Affairs and/or a roster of previously identified experts on call to support verification or monitoring requirements?

I acknowledge having contributed as many questions as answers in this statement, but we believe it would be most useful to garner the views of all Member States on these issues so closely connected with the success of our disarmament and non-proliferation endeavours, before coming to any conclusions. We look forward to hearing from others in this regard.

Mr. Trexxa (Italy): I will speak on behalf of the presidency of the European Union. I wish to refer to the statement by the representative of Canada with regard to the issue of verification in all its aspects. Although what is proposed this year is a draft decision, which would include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the item entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", Italy, in its position as presidency of the European Union, wishes to draw the attention of the First Committee on the importance that verification in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation plays in Europe in general, and in the European Union in particular.

Let me recall that observations and inspections have had a key role in enhancing security and cooperation in Europe within the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe/Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe process, and that verification is a fundamental feature of arms control treaties, such as the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. The concept of verification is widely referred to in the Thessaloniki Declaration which, as I stated in my address during the general debate, is the most recent and comprehensive document elaborated by the European Union on the theme of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Through that Declaration, the European Union is committed, inter alia, to politically, financially and technically support multilateral institutions charged with verification. In this respect, we underline the key role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, and support the rapid establishment of a

verification regime for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. International verification should also be an essential component of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices.

Among the basic principles which have been devised to define the European Union strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, let me draw the Committee's attention to the necessity to insure detectability of violations and compliance through existing verification mechanisms and, if necessary, additional verification instruments. From an operational point of view, the action plan for the implementation of the basic principles contemplates, inter alia, providing the IAEA with an adequate budget increase for implementing its safeguards tasks, promoting challenge inspections in the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and further developing the European Union thinking on verification and inspections in general, and especially on UNMOVIC. We therefore support the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/58/L.48, presented this year by Canada, as in the past we have supported the pertinent resolution on the same subject.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): Given the time constraints, I will try to be brief. It is the firm belief of my delegation that deliberations of the First Committee this year should include a lively discussion of pressing topics, such as compliance and verification. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the statement just made by the Canadian delegation on the issue of verification.

My delegation also appreciates the decision of the Canadian delegation to initiate an exchange of views on this vital issue. It hopes that the interaction on this vital issue will lead to a concrete and useful outcome at this year's First Committee session.

We believe that verification activities cannot be considered in isolation from multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts. Indeed, the full implementation of agreements and effective verification thereof are now more important than ever in ensuring the sustainability and the credibility of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) states the need for verification capabilities to be further developed in order to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements. It is the firm belief of my delegation that the development of verification technologies will make significant contributions in both the fields of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

The Republic of Korea stands ready to support any efforts to strengthen the capabilities of those international agencies responsible for carrying out verification activities. In this regard, we express our appreciation to the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for the informative reports they have presented during the course of the general debate, outlining the developments made with respect to verification activities.

Recent disclosures have made us acutely aware of the difficulties in detecting clandestine programmes related to weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, the further development of verification and monitoring technologies will certainly contribute both to promoting confidence in the compliance of all parties and to detecting illegal clandestine activities.

Moreover, having witnessed the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) enhanced verification methods and technologies put into practice in the resumed inspections in Iraq, we believe there is clearly a need to further enhance the effectiveness of the multilateral verification mechanism through better use of national technical means.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty envisages national technical means, such as satellite monitoring, as a supplementary mechanism that could be used to improve its verification regime. Furthermore, given the IAEA's role as the competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring the compliance of States parties with its safeguards agreement, my delegation views the Additional Protocol as an important tool for the Agency's effective verification of compliance with the non-proliferation obligations provided for in the NPT.

As expressed in our general statement to the First Committee, my Government will soon be ratifying this Protocol.

Ms. Bonnier (Sweden): Let me first of all say that Sweden naturally aligns itself fully with the statement that was just delivered by the Italian

Presidency of the European Union. I would, however, like, on a national level, also to contribute a little bit to the discussion that Canada just called for a short while ago.

Events of the past year have demonstrated that there is a need for enhanced tools at the global level for verification, inspection and analysis with regard to weapons of mass destruction. The International Atomic Energy Agency is mandated to carry out verification and inspection of nuclear facilities. The Chemical Weapons Convention confers a similar mandate upon the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons regarding chemical weapons and facilities.

But when it comes to biological weapons and missiles, there is no international treaty or agreement on which to base similar verification and inspection activities. We are all aware that a major shortcoming of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction is its lack of provisions on compliance monitoring. And to date, there are no international norms covering the production, stockpiling, acquisition and trade in missiles. The Hague Code of Conduct against missile proliferation is a step in the right direction, but it is not a legally binding instrument, nor does it contain provisions concerning compliance monitoring.

What we have, however, is a well-developed instrument to carry out inspections regarding biological weapons and missiles. We have the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). The legal framework for its activities is provided by Security Council resolution 1284 (1999). We are all aware that UNMOVIC was set up for a very specific purpose, and that its mandate is temporary. The verification, inspection and analysis expertise that has been built up within UNMOVIC and its predecessor, the United Nations Special Commission, has proven its value. It enjoys the legitimacy that can only be derived from the United Nations. The question is, what will happen to UNMOVIC when its present tasks have been concluded? And what can be done for the United Nations to retain its verification and inspection expertise?

Security Council resolution 1483 (2003), adopted this year on 22 May, underlines the intention of the Security Council to revisit the mandate of UNMOVIC as set forth in several earlier resolutions. To this date, this has not happened, and UNMOVIC has continued working under those parts of its mandate that remain operable. The Secretary-General's 15th quarterly report on the activities of UNMOVIC is due around 1 December 2003. This report will hopefully prompt the Council to make a decision on the future of UNMOVIC.

I would like to suggest two possible options for consideration:

First, discussions have taken place in recent weeks on how the United Nations Secretariat could be reformed in order to be better able to meet persistent and new threats against international peace and security, for example, threats posed by States that are in non-compliance with international disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, and the risk that non-State actors acquire weapons of mass destruction. To make UNMOVIC a permanent resource of the United Nations Secretariat could be a step in that direction.

Secondly, an option would be to transform UNMOVIC into a regular subsidiary organ of the Security Council, along similar lines as the Counter-Terrorism Committee. To this end, a roster of experts could be established. Inspection and verification activities, carried out by experts provided by Member States, could thus be activated by Council action, most likely in the form of a Council resolution in a given case.

As a non-member of the Security Council, Sweden wanted to take this opportunity to stimulate a discussion within the general membership of the United Nations. Out hope is to solicit support for the ideas of retaining the verification, inspection and analysis expertise in the services of the United Nations. Let me, without prejudging the outcome of such a discussion, close by encouraging the Security Council to consider how best to retain the expertise now vested in UNMOVIC.

The Chairman: Let me simply observe at this stage, from the Chair's point of view, that this discussion initiated by Canada, even in the absence of a substantive draft resolution for this year, has already provided a good basis for an interactive thematic discussion, and I would encourage delegations, either today or tomorrow, to continue it.

Mr. Grönberg (Finland): May I first state that, although I am speaking here as a member of the Finnish delegation, I do so, in fact, on behalf of the Presidency of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Conference, which took place in Vienna in September 2003.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 September 1996, and was opened for signature in New York on 24 September of the same year. On that same day, 71 States signed the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States. For the Treaty to enter into force, the deposit of the instruments of ratification by 44 States listed in annex II to the Treaty is required. This rather exceptional rule was developed in order to guarantee that all those States who possess nuclear knowledge would be taken on board.

As it seemed likely that additional efforts would be needed to guarantee entry into force, a mechanism to promote this was developed. In article XIV of the Treaty, it is stipulated that in the event that the Treaty has not entered into force three years after the date of its opening for signature, the depositary of the Treaty shall, upon request of a majority of ratifiers, convene a conference of the ratifiers to consider, and decide by consensus, what measures consistent with international law might be undertaken to accelerate the ratification process in order to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty. The first conference of this kind was held in Vienna in October 1999, under Japanese Presidency, and the second conference in New York in November 2001, under Mexican Presidency.

As of March of this year, 31 States of the 44 listed in annex II had ratified the Treaty. It was recognized that more remained to be done to fulfil the requirement for entry into force. Against that background, States signatories came to an agreement that another conference pursuant to article XIV, facilitating the entry into force of the Treaty, needed to be convened, and that Finland would chair the preparations for that conference.

The Third Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty was held in Vienna from 3 to 5 September this year. The Conference elected the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, as the President of the Conference and representatives of Italy, Morocco, New Zealand, Poland and Venezuela as Vice-Presidents. The Conference was attended by 102 States signatories, 5 non-signatory States, 7 international organizations and 19 non-governmental organizations. Of the States participating in the Conference, 31 were represented at the ministerial, or vice-ministerial level and the high-level of participation is a good proof of the importance States attach to the Treaty.

The Conference held four plenary meetings, in which a general exchange of views on facilitating the entry into force of the Treaty took place, with statements made by representatives of 66 States, including both ratifiers and signatories. Statements were also made by two participating, non-signatory States and non-governmental organizations. The representative of Mexico presented a progress report to the Conference on cooperative efforts to facilitate the entry into force of the Treaty since the Second Conference held in New York in November 2001. An information kit was distributed, examples of which can be found on the table at the back of this room. Those who feel it might be of interest, should feel free to take one; it gives a good picture of what the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization is doing.

The Conference decided to establish a committee of the whole to consider specific measures to facilitate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was subsequently chaired by the representative of Japan. An exhibition on the global verification regime for the CTBT and a seminar on the civil and scientific benefits of the Treaty were also organized in connection with the Conference.

The Conference noted that 168 States had signed the Treaty, 104 States had deposited their instruments of ratification and, of the 44 States listed in annex II to the Treaty, 41 had signed and 32 had also ratified. This means that the requirements set out in the Treaty for its entry into force have not been met. On a positive note, we clearly have been moving in the right direction. That is, since the convening of the 2001 Conference, 20 more States have ratified the Treaty — including one annex II State — and 7 more have signed it. In the final declaration adopted by consensus at the Conference, the participating States addressed the particular importance of prompt signature and ratification by those States whose ratification was needed for the Treaty's entry into force, but who had not yet ratified it.

Noting that the international developments that have occurred since the 2001 Conference make the entry into force of the Treaty as urgent today as when it was negotiated, the Conference reaffirmed that CTBT has an essential role to play in strengthening global peace and security and that prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was one of the most important challenges facing the world. Furthermore, the Conference considered it essential to maintain momentum in elaborating a verification regime capable of meeting the Treaty's verification requirements. The verification system, once it enters into force, will be of an unprecedented global reach and will therefore be able to ensure that States maintain their Treaty commitments.

Although the Treaty has not entered into force, it can be said that its fundamental objective has been attained, as all States have continued to refrain from detonating nuclear weapons. The Conference thus called upon all States to continue their moratoria on exploding nuclear weapons in the context of nuclear tests or for any other purpose.

Aside from adopting the final declaration, the Conference decided this time to adopt a list of concrete measures to be taken to promote the early entry into force of the Treaty. That is a novel approach that I hope will serve its purpose and bring us a bit closer to our goal. The list consists of 12 measures. I will not burden you by enumerating them all, as they can be found in the declaration. I would, however, like to highlight a few of the measures.

We decided to establish a contact list of countries that had ratified the Treaty that would volunteer to assist the coordinator in various regions. Here I would like to pay tribute to all those countries that, during the preparatory phase, indicated their willingness to assist the coordinator in actively promoting the entry into force of the Treaty in their regions. We also agreed that ratifying States would consider appointing a special representative to assist the coordinating State in the performance of its function in promoting the entry into force of the Treaty. Those two new measures broaden decisively the resources available for promotional activities and I welcome them as truly important innovations.

It was further recommended that ratifying States consider establishing a trust fund, financed through voluntary contributions, to support an outreach programme for the promotion of the Treaty.

We also decided to encourage the organization of regional seminars in conjunction with other regional meetings in order to increase awareness of the important role the Treaty has to play. The intention, here, is to organize meetings and seminars on a political level in order to enhance understanding of the importance and benefits of the Treaty. It goes without saying, we also appeal to the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organization to continue its own international cooperation activities and organization of seminars for experts in the legal and technical fields, as well as to continue promoting understanding of the Treaty and demonstrating the benefits of the civil and scientific applications of the verification technologies in such areas, inter alia, as the environment, earth science and technology.

We believe that, as we have seen in other contexts, non-governmental organizations can play an important role in awareness-building. Accordingly, we encourage cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other elements of civil society to raise awareness of and support for the Treaty and its objectives.

The implementation of the measures adopted at the Conference will be discussed at a meeting of the ratifying States to be convened in November. At that meeting, the presidency of the Conference will, it is expected, be selected as the coordinator of the work to be undertaken to implement the measures agreed upon. In performing his duties the coordinator will be assisted by a group of friends of the coordinator composed of the countries on the contact list, which have volunteered to assist the coordinator in various regions, as well as any other countries wishing to take an active part in implementing the measures.

At the conference of ratifying States to be held in November, some of the measures listed in the final declaration will be more closely discussed and considered, as the time available at the Conference did not allow us to go into detail.

As Finland held the presidency of the Vienna Conference, we are very content that it had a successful outcome and we would like once again to express our appreciation and gratitude to all the Conference participants for their willingness to cooperate and compromise. We do hope that the final declaration and

the measures to be implemented will bring the entry into force of the Treaty a bit closer. It is clear, however, that the successful organization of the Conference can in no way be interpreted as signifying that the work has been completed. On the contrary, before the Treaty enters into force much remains to be done. In that endeavour we rest assured that we can count on the good cooperation of all the parties involved, just as they enabled the Conference itself to come to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Shloma (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The issue of control is becoming increasingly significant at both the regional and international levels, and there is a need for effective verification to ensure global security and stability. In our region, the uncontrolled proliferation of military technology can lead to conflicts that may spread to other regions.

The Republic of Belarus believes that confidence-building measures are one of the key elements of control at the regional and subregional levels. Such measures include strengthening regional capacity as an essential component of international security and avoiding the risk of the eruption of conflict, which in turn will lower the risk of incorrect interpretation of military activity, of accidental invasion and of other military incidents. By creating a climate of mutual trust — an essential element — such confidence-building measures can lead to balanced reductions in weapons and more effective functioning of the disarmament regime. We commend those countries that have concluded bilateral and multilateral measures in this area, and we call upon other States to support measures conducive to such agreements at the regional and subregional levels.

An important element in the further development of the disarmament regime is a system aimed at flexibility in arms control in various regions of the world. We need to ensure the inalienable right of States to a certain level of security so that States and groups of States that have reached agreements cannot achieve superiority over other States at any stage of the system's development.

We should like to refer to the importance of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is a key element of European security. The Republic of Belarus was an active participant in the negotiations on the Treaty and was one of the first States to ratify it. Now we are moving from the old system — characterized by blocs and confrontation in Europe — to a new one based on cooperation and confidence. In addition, the adaptation of the Treaty has opened the door for other States to join it. The Republic of Belarus would like to see the swift entry into force of the Treaty and the joining of new members. That would strengthen European security and increase transparency in the area of arms control on the European continent, which would serve as a stimulus for States in other regions of the world. In that connection, we strongly appeal to other Member States that have not yet done so to sign the agreement on adaptation of the Treaty as soon as possible. We should also like to consider developing principles that could provide a basis for the negotiation of regional conventional arms control agreements at the Conference on Disarmament.

The Republic of Belarus, emphasizing its previous arms control policy, has become a sponsor of the draft resolution on that subject. The Republic of Belarus shares the international community's concern about the problem of anti-personnel mines. That fact was demonstrated by our de facto joining the international moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines in 1995 and extending its participation through the end of 2007.

Recently, the Republic of Belarus, in a clear demonstration of the consistency of its policy, deposited with the Secretary-General its instruments of accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Convention. Pursuant to the Convention, our country must destroy its stockpiles of landmines within four years. Belarus requires considerable financial and technological resources to ensure the elimination of the more than 4 million anti-personnel mines we inherited after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Before acceding to the Convention, Belarus had destroyed more than 100,000 of those landmines on its own.

It should be noted that conventional anti-personnel mines can be disposed of either by incineration or by open detonation. However, because of ecological concerns, those methods cannot be applied to mines with liquid explosives, and we have 3.6 million of such mines. In the light of those circumstances, we appeal to Governments, international agencies and non-governmental

organizations to assist the Republic of Belarus in its efforts to eliminate its stockpiles. All forms of technical, technological and financial assistance will be warmly welcomed.

The Republic of Belarus actively cooperates with the United Nations on mine-related problems, mindful of the Organization's important coordinating role in that field. Information concerning the need to assist Belarus on the issue was provided to the participants in an international seminar on mine-related problems, held in Minsk in March 2000, as well as to the representatives of the United Nations Mine Action Service who visited Belarus in August 2000. The report on the results of the United Nations fact-finding mission concluded that it was necessary to assist Belarus in eliminating its anti-personnel mine stockpiles.

The Ottawa Convention has become a powerful tool that provides us with an opportunity to achieve the complete elimination and total prohibition of anti-personnel mines, which cause enormous human suffering on every continent. I hope that the increasing trend towards strict implementation of the Convention will help us to accomplish our mission honourably.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). I should like to begin by reaffirming and reiterating the Movement's commitment to promoting international peace and security through disarmament measures. Our positions on disarmament and international security issues are reflected clearly in the decisions made at the XIII Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 25 February 2003. NAM would also like to strongly reaffirm its view that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, provide the only sustainable way to address disarmament and international security issues.

As our contribution to the multilateral disarmament process, I now have the honour to introduce five draft resolutions and two draft decisions on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, as contained in the following documents.

The first is document A/C.1/58/L.24, dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace". By adopting this draft resolution, the General Assembly would reaffirm its determination to preserve the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace for all time, as called for by the Declaration. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean would also be requested to continue his consultations with the members of the Committee on the implementation of the Declaration. We trust that the draft resolution will continue to enjoy overwhelming support.

The second document is A/C.1/58/L.25, dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". That draft resolution was updated to take into account the discussion of the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee, for the fourth special session on disarmament. Before proceeding further, I would like to make some oral amendments to operative paragraphs 2 and 4 of that document, as follows:

In operative paragraph 2, the words "fifty-ninth session" should read "sixtieth session", and in operative paragraph 4, the words "sixtieth session" should read "sixty-first session".

The draft resolution calls for the General Assembly to convene another working group with the same mandate before the end of its sixtieth session. We hope that the General Assembly will give its support by adopting the draft resolution without a vote, as was the case at the last session. We also hope that the cooling-off period will enable delegations to start anew and engage in substantive discussion in the Working Group with a view to convening the fourth special session.

The third draft document is A/C.1/58/L.26, dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation". As you are aware, this draft resolution was introduced at the last session. As I stated earlier, the Non-Aligned Movement believes strongly in multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as the only sustainable way of addressing disarmament and international security issues.

At a time when multilateralism and the United Nations itself are faced with challenges such as the doctrine of pre-emptive action, we believe that it is critical for the General Assembly to adopt such a resolution. The draft resolution embodies the desire of the international community for multilateral

cooperation in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Much is at stake, including the danger of the unravelling of existing international disarmament treaties. In that regard, we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted with overwhelming support.

The fourth draft resolution is document A/C.1/58/L.27, dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control". The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) considers the issue to be important item on our agenda. At the last session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/64 (2002) with overwhelming support. The global environment is an issue of the utmost importance, especially for succeeding generations, and we should try to ensure that we take the necessary measures to preserve and protect it by drafting and implementing agreements on disarmament and arms control. NAM hopes that all delegations will join in supporting the draft resolution.

The next draft, document A/C.1/58/L.28, dated 15 October 2003, is entitled "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament". These centres have been instrumental in promoting understanding and cooperation among States in their respective regions in the fields of peace, disarmament and development. We hope that the centres will continue to receive the support, especially that of Member States, with a view to the implementation and strengthening of their activities and programmes.

The sixth draft, document A/C.1/58/L.29, dated 15 October 2003, is entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development". This draft decision is introduced pursuant to resolution 57/65 (2002) of 22 November 2002. At its last session, the General Assembly decided to establish a group of governmental experts in 2003 to review the relationship between disarmament and development in the current international context and to present its report for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. We expect that the panel will be established as soon as possible so that it may carry out its mandate and request the General Assembly to take the necessary action at the next session to that end. The Non-Aligned Movement intends to pursue the matter further in this Committee and the General Assembly at the next session.

The final document that I wish to introduce today is a draft decision (A/C.1/58/L.30), dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security". At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted a similar decision, namely, decision 56/417, and the Non-Aligned Movement is introducing the present text with a view to the Committee taking a similar decision at this session.

In conclusion, may I state that the Non-Aligned Movement believes in the vital importance of multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions in addressing disarmament and international security issues. The draft resolutions and decisions that I have introduced are submitted for the consideration of this Committee in that spirit. We are confident that, in that same spirit, those draft resolutions will continue to receive the support of Member States. We have no doubt that their adoption and implementation will contribute significantly to the international community's aspiration to resolve the issues of disarmament and international security. At this juncture, on behalf of members of the Non-Aligned Movement, may I express our sincere appreciation to the delegations that support our draft resolutions and decisions.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement and I also wish to thank him for having made a clustered introduction of a total of six documents, which, in my view, greatly contributes to the efficient and effective work of this Committee.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Uruguay wishes to speak on behalf of the member States of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and its associated States — Bolivia and Chile — to address the implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Our six countries, besides having ratified the Treaty, have already expressed individually — and on more than one occasion — their opposition to nuclear weapons of any kind. Likewise, it should not be necessary to reiterate their similar opposition to any kind of nuclear testing. To be the first organized subregion to prohibit nuclear testing is a clear demonstration of our position with regard to the issue. With the same clarity of purpose, our countries, through the Organization of American States, have supported the call to other countries of our region to adhere to or ratify the Treaty. That position reflects the

fact that although we support maintaining the moratorium over nuclear testing, we believe it is not enough and the CTBT offers the reasons why.

The CTBT has several characteristics that make it a positive instrument for non-proliferation and disarmament. Its non-discriminatory nature and its universal scope make the CTBT an adequate complement to the network of instruments designed to preserve security. And in a global scenario of uncertainty, the ban on nuclear testing acquires an even larger relevance, since it represents a concrete step that allows us to receive or send clear signals regarding the commitment of States with regard to a planet free from nuclear weapons.

For this reason, and even though we have not yet reached the necessary number of ratifications to make the CTBT an effective tool, MERCOSUR and associates wish once more to draw attention to it and calls for accession or ratification to it as soon as possible.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): Today I am taking the floor in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament in order to present to the First Committee the report of the Conference on its work during the 2003 session and to introduce the corresponding draft resolution (A/C.1/58/L.5).

The report of the Conference on Disarmament has been issued as document A/58/27. The factual summary of its work in 2003, contained in the report, indicates that, again this year, the Conference on Disarmament has not achieved noticeable progress in terms of substantive work on the issues on its agenda. However, that does not at all mean that significant developments have not taken place.

Indeed, after the adoption of the agenda at the beginning of its 2003 session, the Conference immediately entered into the exploration, inter alia, of the possibilities generated by the official submission of a cross-group proposal on the programme of work drafted by five Ambassadors, former Presidents of the Conference, commonly known as the A5 proposal. Its subsequent revision by them has led to the broadening of support for the proposal and we witnessed constructive efforts to seek common ground in this regard, particularly towards the end of the session.

In addition, the successive Presidents and all delegations made various efforts throughout the session to revitalize the Conference. In the process, not only was the programme of work per se addressed, but significant contributions were also made to providing substantive discussion on specific issues in the plenary meetings through the submission of working papers and presentation of statements on substantive topics.

Furthermore, some new ideas were pursued, especially from the perspective of making the Conference more responsive to the new challenges to arms control and disarmament.

Moreover, other options that could facilitate an agreement on the programme of work were explored, including cooperation and exchange of information between the Conference on Disarmament and other intergovernmental organizations concerned with disarmament. The Conference also considered possible ways of enhancing the contribution of civil society to its work.

The Conference benefited considerably from the visits of dignitaries and high-level officials. In 2003, the Conference was addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Her Excellency Mrs. Yoriko Kawaguchi, as well as by eminent officials from India, Norway, Pakistan and the United States of America.

This common strong interest in utilizing this important institution for international peace and security has been clearly demonstrated, and active efforts to achieve that end have been made throughout this year's session. It is nevertheless true that the Conference did not agree on a programme of work to establish any subsidiary body on specific items on its agenda.

As I emphasized in my statement at the conclusion of the 2003 session, the programme facing the Conference remains the same as before, that is, how to strike a balance among different priorities in its programme of work. The report indicates two general approaches that have been evident in this regard. Some delegations were of the view that linkages should not be established between elements of the programme of work and/or of the agenda, while others stressed the need for a comprehensive approach. It seems that this dilemma can only be solved if, in the preparation for the next session, Conference members not only give consideration to their own priorities, but also reflect seriously on how to balance their priorities with those of others.

The report clearly indicates that the members of the Conference on Disarmament are vitally interested in commencing substantive work early in the 2004 session. In order to facilitate that task, the Conference requested me and the incoming President to conduct consultations during the intersessional period and, if possible, make recommendations, taking into account all relevant proposals, including the revised A5 proposal contained in document CD/1693/Rev1, views presented and discussions held.

The Conference also requested both of us to endeavour to keep the membership informed, as appropriate, of those consultations. I have already begun consultations in close coordination with Ambassador Amina Mohammad of Kenya, the incoming President. I will make every effort, until the end of my presidency and in the face of this formidable challenge, to prepare the way for next year's Conference to begin substantive work on priority items on its agenda.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament, which is contained in document A/C.1/58/L.5. While following in general the usual pattern and content of resolutions on the subject adopted without a vote at the previous sessions of the General Assembly, this year's draft resolution also attempts to send a clear political message that there is an urgent need for the Conference to commence substantive work, as provided in the seventh preambular paragraph of the draft.

I deem it necessary and appropriate at this political juncture to articulate a sense of urgency. It is absolutely crucial for all States to embrace this sense of urgency in the lead-up to the 2004 session, so that the Conference may finally bring its stalemate to an end.

We have also developed a new paragraph, operative paragraph 5, which requests all member States of the Conference to cooperate with the current President and successive Presidents in their effort to guide the Conference to the early commencement of substantive work in the 2004 session. It is essential for the Presidents to be assured of full cooperation from all member States by deeds, not only by words, in their efforts to achieve a decision by consensus.

The resolution also highlights in its fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs the main developments taking place at the Conference during its 2003 session, such as active discussions on the programme of work, significant contributions to promote substantive discussions on issues on the agenda in the plenary meetings and discussions held on other issues that could also be relevant to the current international security environment.

Finally, as was the case with last year's resolution, operative paragraph 4 stipulates that the current and incoming Presidents are requested to conduct consultations during the intersessional period and if possible, make recommendations. This paragraph has been drafted on the basis of paragraph 38 of the Conference on Disarmament report that I have just presented.

The Conference on Disarmament deals in its work with the most pressing security issues in the entire world, and therefore the continuing impact on this body of such issues is a source of concern for us all. Needless to say, the problems facing the Conference on Disarmament are a reflection of current world political dynamics which complicate the conditions surrounding multilateral disarmament efforts. We should redouble our common efforts to overcome these problems. In view of the difficulty of the task that is so important to the world, this year's draft resolution goes beyond the usual procedural pattern and sets forth the clear political commitment of the entire international community working cooperatively, as a matter of urgent priority.

In my current capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I am introducing this draft resolution with the determination to carry forward my consultations in such a way as to foster a favourable environment in which successive presidents will be able to meet the high expectations of the world community. In this regard I will continue to count on the tireless spirit of cooperation and flexibility which is essential in pursuing global interests and which has already been amply demonstrated by delegations throughout this year's annual session, as well as during my consultations on this draft resolution. I recommend that the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.5 be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Kmentt (Austria): Since this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, and to offer our full support to you. I am taking the floor to thank Japan and in particular Ambassador Inoguchi for her efforts regarding the draft

resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.5. There are some formulations in the draft resolution that clearly express the sense of urgency that the international community feels regarding the stalemate that has been imposed on the Conference on Disarmament and that has prevented substantive work for seven years. In this regard I would like to recall the statement of the European Union in the general debate on this issue. We think that it is highly appropriate that the General Assembly expresses this sense of urgency.

As many of you might know, Austria considered tabling a separate draft resolution with exactly that aim. We have decided not to table it, but I would like to explain the thinking behind our proposal, which was based on the fact that the Conference on Disarmament, although an independent body, is linked to the General Assembly by a very formal relationship. The Conference on Disarmament's requirement to report to the General Assembly under its rules of procedure numbers 43 to 46 stems from that formal relationship. Since 1997, these reports to the General Assembly have been devoid of progress. Consequently, and as a matter of responsibility, a more direct engagement with the General Assembly is therefore required than the Assembly's merely taking note of the factual report. This responsibility is all the more pressing at a time of widespread international concern about proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery as well as about such weapons and nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorists and, generally, about the commitment to nuclear disarmament. The current situation therefore merits that the United Nations General Assembly with its universal membership, express its concern about the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and urge the Conference on Disarmament's member States to overcome their outstanding differences.

Consequently, we thought it to be appropriate to give members as well as non-members of the Conference on Disarmament the chance to express their dissatisfaction with the current stalemate and their wish for substantive progress on disarmament issues. We also wanted to bring to the attention of the broader membership of the United Nations the ongoing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament over its programme of work.

In doing so, it was our goal to underline the fact that the overwhelming majority of States is of the same conviction regarding the need to start substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament and thereby increase the pressure on the Conference on Disarmament to resolve the impasse over its programme of work at the outset of 2004. All delegations which have taken the floor in this Committee, have expressed their wish that the Conference on Disarmament adopt a programme of work at the beginning of 2004 and begin its work. Our draft resolution was initially elaborated precisely to give expression to that shared desire.

At the end of the 2003 session, as just mentioned by Ambassador Inoguchi, there were some encouraging signs of movement. We very much appreciate the flexibility demonstrated by some States regarding their readiness to join consensus on the basis of the amended version of the five ambassadors proposal contained in CD/1693 Rev.1.

Intensive consultations in Geneva and during the last few weeks in New York on the basis of our draft, clearly showed to us that our approach was widely shared. However, some delegations expressed concern about the timing of such a draft resolution, given the fact that some movement towards overcoming the Conference on Disarmament's situation might be possible.

It was and is, of course, our only intention to be constructive and to do whatever we can to help in this process. We have therefore decided not to table our draft resolution this year, as we do not want to do anything that could be considered counterproductive at this very crucial moment.

However, let me be clear that we — and I am sure the vast majority of the international community — now have a very clear expectation that the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament will be overcome at the beginning of next year's session. We are optimistic that we will not have to reconsider our draft resolution next year.

In closing, I would like to stress again our support for the current and the incoming presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in their efforts to achieve this goal, as well as Austria's appreciation and support for the amended proposal of the five ambassadors.

Ms. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is with great satisfaction that we welcome the new report of the Secretary-General on the maintenance of

the United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons and its improvement.

In the 10 years since it has been established, the United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons is a voluntary mechanism which has had its scope expanded, not only because of the outstanding job that was done by the group of governmental experts under the leadership of Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan, but also because States have understood that the objective of transparency is mutually beneficial. During the period of time that has passed, participation in the Register has expanded and we hope it will be maintained and consolidated over time. For this reason we would like to express our support for the draft resolution introduced by the distinguished representative of the Netherlands, Mr. Sanders, and we invite delegations to join as sponsors.

There is no doubt that the United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons requires further adjustments. But we are making progress in the right direction. The Register plays an important role in promoting confidence and in improving and strengthening bilateral and regional dialogues. For that reason, we would also invite others to join efforts to continue working towards its improvement and universalization.

Mr. Luaces (United States of America): The United States delegation wishes briefly to introduce our draft resolution, A/C.1/58/L.15, entitled "Enhancing the contribution of the First Committee to the maintenance of international peace and security".

In the interest of brevity, I shall summarize orally our written presentation, which we have asked the Secretariat to distribute to delegations.

The United States believes that Member States should examine how the First Committee can best manage its annual schedule to permit a fuller examination both of its existing agenda and of new threats to our common security. As the Secretary-General rightly concluded last month, "We must not shy away from questions about the adequacy and effectiveness of the rules and instruments at our disposal". (*A/58/PV.7*)

To have the time to focus on such issues, however, the First Committee needs to find ways to streamline its work. The Committee also needs to ensure that its agenda does not duplicate, or subtract from, important work already being done in other United Nations forums or outside the United Nations system.

Our draft resolution neither proposes nor commits Member States to a specific course of action. Rather, it enables Governments to present national views on this important topic that the Secretariat would merely compile and distribute to all Member States in an organized manner for us all to review before the First Committee reconvenes next year. That, we believe, is both the minimum and the most that the Member States can ask of one another as this process commences.

Our delegation wishes to inform the Committee that we are consulting with a number of delegations on potential amendments to the preamble of our draft resolution that would make clear the duty of the Committee to seek to address both persistent threats to our common security and new threats that have become manifest in the period following the events of 11 September 2001.

We have an opportunity during this session to contribute in a collective manner to the ongoing effort by the Secretary-General and by the President of the General Assembly to make the General Assembly a more effective body. Indeed, just one week ago, we all heard President Hunte say here that he had read the various proposals for improving the work of the First Committee and that such work "would complement our work in the General Assembly". Delegations will recall that President Hunte also said, and again I quote, "I encourage every Committee, including the First Committee, with proposals for reform that enjoy broad support to put them into place this year".

The United States stands by President Hunte and by the Secretary-General on this issue. We firmly believe that our improvement initiative will complement and feed into the broader effort to revitalize the General Assembly and therefore that our draft resolution merits adoption without a vote. Together, let us seize this opportunity to begin a process that will renew the ability of the First Committee to contribute in a meaningful way to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Varma (India): We have taken the floor in order to introduce a draft resolution on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, under agenda item 74 (f), as contained in document A/C.1/58/L.33. The resolution

is sponsored by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Viet Nam and Zambia, and my own country, India.

Since 1989, India has brought before this Committee the resolution entitled, "The role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament". Significant progress in science and technology, especially recent advances information technology, advanced materials, biotechnology and space applications, offer vast possibilities for socio-economic development. Access to those technologies for developmental purposes is undoubtedly a crucial prerequisite for developing countries, including their participation in global trade. That fact has been recognized by various conventions for arms control and disarmament. For example, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the first multilateral disarmament agreement of a universal character eliminating an entire class of weapons of mass destruction, offered an opportunity to put in place a multilaterally negotiated non-discriminatory and legal mechanism that will address proliferation concerns about transfers, while promoting the economic interests of States Parties. The Chemical Weapons Convention has placed an obligation on the States Parties to review their existing national regulations in the field of trade in chemicals in order to make them consistent with the Convention.

India has recognized that the dual-use character of many of the advances in science and technology and the potential for their use for both civilian and military applications, is a legitimate cause for concern. However, discriminatory regimes that limit the exchange of advanced technologies to exclusive groups of States deny access to those crucial technologies to the developing countries, even for peaceful developmental purposes. Thus, a non-economic barrier has prevented the normal exchange of technology on a global basis. This runs counter to the spirit of global economic exchanges.

We should also take into account the growing energy needs, particularly in the developing world, which must be met without adversely affecting the environment. It must be recognized that the exclusive export control policies were initiated at a time when there were no global agreements that comprehensively addressed proliferation concerns. Recent events question the effectiveness of such exclusive arrangements in achieving their stated purpose of strengthening effective non-proliferation, in particular, their ability to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, the means of their delivery or related materials and technology.

We need to reorient our efforts to address issues of global proliferation concern. It is necessary to elaborate generally equitable, inclusive and universally acceptable arrangements regulating the transfer of materials and technologies related to advanced weapons systems, including weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We have consistently maintained that multilaterally negotiated and non-discriminatory agreements that are transparent and open to universal participation are the best way forward to address proliferation concerns regarding materials and technologies related to advance weapons systems, weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The reflection of that approach in multilateral disarmament agreements would ensure their effectiveness and improve the chances of their universality. At the Non-Aligned summit in Kuala Lumpur, a final document was issued and adopted in February this year that also reflected that point of view.

There is need today, more than ever before, to agree on an effective and transparent system of export controls of technologies and methodologies that would achieve the objectives of non-proliferation in all its aspects, while ensuring access to those technologies for peaceful purposes. This draft resolution hopes to encourage and support such a process.

India, along with the sponsors commends adoption of this draft resolution by this Committee and hopes that the draft will receive the wide support of the Committee.

Let me make two brief references to some other draft resolutions. The first relates to document A/C.1/58/L.1 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We have the pleasure to join other sponsors in supporting that draft resolution. We also take this opportunity to express our support for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.50 put forward by Sweden concerning the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). As Chairman-designate of the meeting of State parties to the Convention, to be held

at the end of November, India attaches considerable importance to the CCW process, which offers a unique opportunity and a forum for States of diverse security interests to harmonize and move forward in specific areas where progress is possible.

We also would like to support draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.3, which was put forward by the Russian Federation, on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. India has joined the consensus on this draft resolution since 1998 and supports the Russian Federation in its objective to bring forward this important draft resolution. As a country with substantial and growing capabilities and interests in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, we look forward to contributing to cooperative international efforts in that regard, in particular through the Group of Governmental Experts as has been proposed by the draft resolution in operative paragraph 4. In doing so, we would carry forward our work with regard to an extremely important emerging field of activity.

Mr. Broucher (United Kingdom): At this time I should like to return to the subject of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms on which I commented briefly a few days ago. The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the consensus report of the 2003 group of Governmental experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. This was the fourth review of the Register and the first time since the establishment of this instrument in 1992 that agreement was reached on significant technical adjustments to the Register's categories.

The United Kingdom believes the report contains a number of significant recommendations which are designed to further improve the operation of the Register and enhance its global relevance. A number of delegations have already described the achievements of the group on artillery systems and man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). In the interests of good time management, I shall not repeat these points, but shall comment rather on the prospects for future progress. The full text of my written statement will be posted electronically on www.fco.gov.uk/ukdis.

The group identified a number of issues on which consensus could not be reached at this time, but to which further consideration should be given by the next review process. One area of particular importance to the United Kingdom and others is the potential for the Register to support the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects. There is significant potential for the Register to support global action in this area.

The United Nations Programme of Action highlighted the importance of transparency as an essential component of dealing with the problem of small arms and light weapons proliferation. It reads,

> "To encourage regions to develop, where appropriate and on a voluntary basis, measures to enhance transparency with a view to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

In this regard, the United Kingdom encourages Member States that are in a position to do so, to submit data on their small arms and light weapons transfers, as part of the voluntary additional background information, to the Register. The United Kingdom will be undertaking to do so and hopes that this practice will be recognized by the time of the next regular review.

The United Kingdom believes that apart from technical adjustments to the seven categories of the Register, the scope of the Register should be expanded to include reporting on procurement through national production and military holdings. Merely having data on transfers is not enough. An adequate assessment of whether transfers and build-ups of conventional weapons are indeed destabilizing is difficult. Accurate assessments rely on a baseline — military holdings — and access to military technology from national production, in order to build the complete picture.

The increasing willingness of participating nations to provide such background information, including details of types, goes a long way towards satisfying this requirement and is to be further encouraged. Placing such information on the same footing as that for transfers would be a major contribution to the operation and usefulness of the Register.

The United Kingdom commends the Group of Experts for their recommendations and looks forward

to the further strengthening of, and greater participation in the Register.

While I have the floor I should like briefly to respond in an interactive way to the statement made by the representative of Canada about verification. In doing so I fully align myself with the statement already made by Italy on behalf of the European Union.

The United Kingdom attaches considerable importance to verification and welcomes Canada's suggestion of further discussion of these issues. In particular we see merit in Canada's suggestion to make maximum use of existing machinery in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We would also see merit in the idea of a panel of experts on which the United Nations Secretary-General could call, when mandated by the Security Council, to carry out specific verification tasks.

However, we would have some reservations about creating new standing machinery, in particular in view of the resource implications that this would have. We agree that further discussion is needed of ways in which the expertise of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission could be retained.

Ms. Makupula (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development. The United Nations Register continues to be the most significant global transparency instrument in the field of conventional arms transfers, and as such, we would strongly encourage broader participation in the Register by all United Nations Member States. The report not only contains very useful information and statistics on conventional arms transfers, but importantly, information on the deliberations, conclusions and recommendations of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts.

South Africa is pleased to note that the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts made significant strides in the review and further development of the Register. This is the first periodic review of the Register that has yielded substantive results, and this exercise has underlined the importance of such regular re-examinations as it is vital that the Register develop into an instrument that is more widely perceived as being relevant, particularly among developing countries. In that context, the Group's recommendation that the artillery threshold be lowered from 100 mm to 75 mm is particularly welcome, as it will include reporting on transfers of more of the types of equipment that have been used in recent conflicts in Africa — such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Also, the inclusion of man-portable air defence systems in the missiles and missile launchers category represents a significant step in bringing the Register's categories in line with arms increasingly being used in the twenty-first century, and thus in contributing to the global fight against terror.

South Africa has noted that during the deliberations a number of other proposals were raised, but that the Group was not able to reach consensus on those issues. Importantly, my delegation is aware that the Group spent a significant amount of time discussing the issue of small arms and light weapons as the weapons of choice in conflicts in Africa and the rest of the developing world. In that context, it reflected on how transfers of those weapons could be included in the Register. We acknowledge that reporting on such weapons transfers might be difficult, but South Africa continues to believe that this is one area where the Register might gain some relevance for African countries.

South Africa's view is that, if this instrument is to gain broader support, it cannot be achieved by Member States alone. My delegation is aware that the Group spent some time discussing the support that the United Nations Secretariat could provide in the achievement of this goal. We note that the Group recognized the need to support the strengthening of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in order to improve the continuing operation of the Register. The Group concluded that the Department should actively support and promote the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a primary mission. The Department for Disarmament Affairs needs the necessary financial support to be able to do so.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to thank the Chairperson of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina, for the exemplary manner in which he guided the deliberations of the Group. The success of the Group can in no small part be attributed to his engaging and facilitating style, his consultative approach, his patience — especially when that of some other members of the Group had run out — and his

enormous wealth of experience in multilateral diplomacy. We commend him for his tireless efforts.

Mr. Udedibia (Nigeria): I have asked for the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.11, entitled "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba)", on behalf of the African Group.

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba) was signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996. The Cairo Declaration adopted on that occasion emphasized that nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in regions of tension such as the Middle East, enhanced global and regional peace and security. The signing of the Treaty of Pelindaba constitutes an important contribution by the African countries to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Considering that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East, would enhance African security and the viability an African nuclear-weapon-free zone, the draft resolution calls upon African States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty as soon as possible so that it may enter into force without delay. Furthermore, while expressing appreciation to the nuclear-weapon States that have signed the Protocols that concern them, it calls upon those States that have not yet ratified those Protocols to do so as soon as possible. It also urges those States contemplated in Protocol III to the Treaty that have not yet done so to take all necessary measures to ensure the speedy application of the Treaty to territories for which they are internationally responsible and that lie within the limits of the geographical zones established in the Treaty.

The draft resolution further calls on African States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that have not yet done so to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, pursuant to the Treaty. In so doing, they can satisfy the requirements of article 9 (b) of the Treaty of Pelindaba when it enters into force. They should also conclude additional protocols to the safeguards agreements on the basis of the Model Protocol, approved by the Board of Governors of the Agency on 15 May 1997.

The draft resolution is basically the same as the one adopted at the fifty-sixth session. It has always been adopted without a vote by the First Committee and the General Assembly, and it will be appreciated if it is similarly adopted without a vote at this session.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join in the discussion on the subject of verification that was started by Canada and continued by the representative of Sweden and by the representative of Italy, who was speaking on behalf of the European Union. In that context, I would like to mention the establishment of a permanent disarmament verification body within the United Nations.

The threats linked to the dangers of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are increasing. Until now, the international community, and most importantly, the Security Council or certain of its most eminent members, have tried to respond through the creation of a host of international instruments — treaties, conventions, export controls or diplomatic activities. The whole system was based on the implementation of international inspection mechanisms targeting specific types of weapons or specific crises. It has to be said that the results thus obtained have not always been satisfactory and that those existing instruments need to be strengthened so that they can be more effective.

At a meeting of the Security Council in New York on 19 March 2003, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominique de Villepin, envisaged the establishment of a new, permanent organ — a disarmament body under the aegis of the United Nations. On the occasion of a speech made on 28 August 2003 at a conference of ambassadors in Paris, Minister de Villepin made some clarifications: the United Nations should be provided with the capacity to react rapidly and effectively in key areas; and France would also like to see the establishment of a disarmament body, which could be placed at the disposal of the United Nations Secretary-General under the authority of the Security Council. More recently, on 23 September 2003, the President of the Republic of France proposed the creation of a permanent inspection body under the authority of the Security Council.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the danger of seeing them fall into the hands of terrorists are among the major challenges the international community faces in the twenty-first century. We are collectively duty-bound to give the Security Council the means to deal with those new threats to international peace and security. The creation

of an integrated, multidisciplinary disarmament inspection body within the United Nations could address those concerns. We are not starting from a blank sheet. Indeed, considerable resources have already been invested in the domain of international verification, for example, in the United Nations Special Commission, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, inspections of conventional arms, and others.

That is why France believes that the best solution is for us to build on what already exists, using it to the best advantage. With this in mind, we bring up certain important questions, and the list is not exhaustive, with regard to this body. What mission should it have? What structure should it have? Where should it be situated? Where should it fit into the system? What will its governing principles be? What staff should serve it? What mandate will it have? What financing would be available to such a body?

In calling here for the establishment of a disarmament inspection body, the French delegation is trying to contribute to the thinking and to lay out paths for that thinking, suggesting a collective response to the major threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists. The United Kingdom has offered ideas on the establishment of a committee of the Security Council on proliferation, and Sweden has thought along similar lines to create an international committee. The United States, through its President speaking in the current General Assembly, has announced an initiative to the Security Council. France has proposed that the Council meet at the level of heads of State to discuss the issue of proliferation.

And finally, as the Italian Presidency reminded us, the Council of Europe emphasized, in a statement made in Thessaloniki last June, its eagerness to increase its political, financial and technical support to agencies responsible for verification, to promote the role of the Security Council and to reinforce its ability to take up the challenge of proliferation. Like Sweden, France wanted to take this opportunity to stimulate discussion here in the First Committee and in the international community. Our hope is also to obtain from other members of this Committee further contributions to this debate.

Mr. Jakubowski (Poland): As I am speaking for the first time, I congratulate you and your fellow Bureau members on your election to your high offices.

Poland has joined the statement of the European Union in the general debate in which the Union presented its position on a large number of issues, including the Conference on Disarmament. Nevertheless, at the national level, I would like to share a few thoughts on the Conference, mainly in the context of confidence-building.

Poland has always supported disarmament as one of the most important tools in building a more peaceful and secure world. My country has constantly been among the most active parties in various negotiations in this field, most recently in the Conference. Thus, my country strongly believes that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament, has, and will continue to have, a profound role to play in strengthening international security, as well as in building trust and confidence among nations. Disarmament is not a goal in itself; it is a vehicle to take us to a better world. The Conference on Disarmament is also one of the best forums to carry out effective multilateralism, which is the basis for successfully meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

We should focus on ideas that have the power to bring us closer in our understanding of international security. Enhanced transparency and confidence-building measures have shown themselves to have such strength. Our common endeavours, ranging from the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, the regional implementation of the Programme of Action, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the Ottawa Convention, help us to go beyond the traditional suspicions and lack of trust between nations.

In our opinion, one of the ideas we might concentrate our attention on during this session of the First Committee would be a positive attitude to best practices sharing. That is clearly very important in the area of confidence-building. The European experience — such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Open Skies Treaty — provides sound examples of the ability of nations to reach above narrowly interpreted national interests.

Many elements of the thinking behind those instruments could be considered in other regions and be adapted perhaps to other regions' historical traditions. We, for our part, would not only be prepared but also keen to learn from others.

In this context it is more than obvious that the role of the Conference on Disarmament is to provide States with the best possible conditions for closing the gaps between their positions in the search for consensus. In so doing, the Conference on Disarmament itself is one of the most important confidence-building mechanisms, which, unfortunately, still has not fulfilled its potential. The Conference is well prepared for negotiations when the right time comes and when issues are ripe for negotiations. We all know that. It does not mean that the Conference will hold negotiations every year. The difficulties are not the fault of the machinery there in Geneva. It depends on political will in respective capitals. We must always remember: it is for States to close those gaps, not for the Conference itself. It is up to the States to make the best use of the opportunities the Conference provides.

However, throughout the process of consultations within the Conference and as a result of it, after each exchange of views, we get an even better and clearer understanding of each other's positions. We are better able to understand how to move forward. This is a confidence-building process and that is of fundamental importance in a changed international security environment.

After the end of the bipolar world, we live in a world influenced by many uncertain factors. While discussing issues of nuclear disarmament, chemical and biological weapons, missiles, small arms, landmines and other conventional weapons, one of the first steps to make is to gain confidence among ourselves. The Conference on Disarmament should be a place where we can hold a comprehensive discussion on factors leading to specific measures that build the trust necessary to advance the disarmament and non-proliferation goals of the international community.

It is, certainly, difficult to come to terms with the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament while we face so many challenges. Seven years without a programme of work should come to an end. In our judgement, this Committee should be giving its full support for intercessional consultations to be continued by the Ambassadors of Japan and Kenya, as this Committee is directly interested in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Thus, this Committee should be a source of inspiration and bold thinking about possible actions in the Conference on Disarmament. It could reflect on such issues as how the Conference could be more in tune with today's challenges, and how to help the Conference start substantive work on what is mature enough to negotiate.

The last question is of particular importance. We reached consensus long ago on one issue at least, and we actually commenced work on that, and then we stopped. This is not only a question of a programme of work. Equally important, or even more important in our view, is the credibility of the Conference. How firm is our resolve to stand behind the consensus we have reached? It is my sincere hope that the Conference on Disarmament shall start substantial work very soon indeed, early next year.

Mr. Issa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It pleases me to present to you on behalf of the countries members of the Arab League, a draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" in document A/C.1/58/L.23. This draft resolution reflects the concern of the countries of the Middle East, in fact the whole of the international community, with regard to the danger resulting from the possibility of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East and the continued existence of nuclear facilities in the region that are not subject to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

This concern has been expressed at different conferences held to review the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the last of which was held in the year 2000. This draft resolution emphasizes the need for all countries in the region to take serious and operational steps towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East, for the accession of all countries in the region to the NPT and for their compliance with all its provisions. It calls upon Israel as the only country in the region that has not yet acceded to the NPT to do so without delay and subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The draft resolution also calls upon the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly in its next

session a report concerning the progress achieved in this connection.

I would like to submit also a draft resolution entitled "Establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East". Egypt has submitted this draft resolution for more than twenty-five years now. The draft resolution reflects the priority of the parties concerned that, practical steps should be taken to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapons-free zone and subject all nuclear activities in the region to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The draft also calls upon all countries of the region to refrain from developing nuclear weapons, testing such weapons, acquiring them or deploying such nuclear weapons in their territory, until a nuclear-weapons-free zone is established in the Middle East

The Chairman: As I have mentioned previously, in accordance with the Committee's program of work and timetable, the third and last phase of the Committee's work, namely action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 62 to 80 will begin on Monday, 27 October. In this connection, I would like to inform the delegations that a paper grouping together the draft resolutions in several clusters, contained in document A/C.1/58/CRP.3, has been made available for your consideration.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that the following countries have joined the sponsors of the following draft resolution. Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.1: Bhutan, Burundi, Estonia, Guyana, Hungary, India, Madagascar and Sri Lanka; L.9: Indonesia and Belarus; L.10: Belarus; L.11: Mali; L.28: Bangladesh; L.21: Cambodia; L.38: Bahamas and Indonesia; L.43 Bosnia and Herzegovina; L.46: Nigeria and Bosnia and Herzegovina; L.49: Mongolia; L.50: India; L.51: Honduras, Slovakia and Switzerland; L.52: Fiji, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Romania and Ukraine; L.53: Afghanistan; L.8, L.9, L.12, L.13, L.16 and L.50: Mali; and L.6, L.11, L.21, L.24, L.32 and L.48: Nauru.

The Chairman: The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow at 10 a.m. sharp in Conference Room 4, and, as I indicated, we will start with those speakers who were moved from this morning's list of speakers to tomorrow. We will start with United Arab Emirates, followed by Indonesia and Norway.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/58/PV.15

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

First Committee
15th meeting
Friday, 24 October 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Sareva ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 62 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: Delegations are invited today to make statements on related matters of disarmament and international security, as well as on international security. They are also invited to continue introducing draft resolutions.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has been given universal recognition for its importance in confidence-building between States and in achieving regional and international peace and security. Such zones have gained wider recognition, especially after the adoption of a number of guidelines and recommendations by the Disarmament Commission for the purpose of promoting those objectives and for maintaining the zones that are contained in the relevant international treaties and conventions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons free from such weapons, in accordance with international law.

The Middle East should not be an exception to this rule even if Israel, the only State in the region to possess this type of dangerous weapons, intransigently refuses to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other relevant international treaties.

We therefore call on the international community, through this important Committee, to reiterate the importance of the following.

First, we must condemn Israel's repeated violations of relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, including Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991), the resolutions on the Middle East adopted by the two NPT Review and Extension Conferences held in 1995 and 2000, as well as other resolutions addressing the threat of Israel's nuclear weapons to the Middle East.

Secondly, the United Nations and the major Powers must fulfil their responsibilities and exert all possible pressure on Israel's Government to compel it to dismantle its nuclear weapons arsenal, accede to the NPT without delay and place all its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards regime, in order to achieve the goal of universal adherence to the NPT in the Middle East and enhance measures for confidence-building, security and peace among the States in the region.

Thirdly, all States must refrain from extending any kind of assistance to Israel — including scientific, technological and financial assistance — that could be used to produce, develop and modernize its nuclear weapons programmes and that could lead to

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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environmental, health and security catastrophes in the region as a whole.

Our ability to confront, without discrimination, those parties that do not abide by international legality will determine the future of this Committee.

We also hope that the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/58/L.22 and A/C.1/58/L.23 will receive your support.

Mr. Adji (Indonesia): I would like to speak first of all on the issue of confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments.

In South-East Asia, confidence-building processes are growing, becoming more specific and being promoted under the auspices of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its regional forum. For quite some time now, these combined efforts have contributed to enhancing mutual understanding and trust, promoting greater transparency and strengthening the commitment to maintaining a climate of peace and stability in the region. In recent years, preventive diplomacy has become a guiding force in advancing these objectives.

My delegation has always regarded the availability of information as promoting confidence and the process of disarmament. This has particular importance for the Asia-Pacific region in removing mistrust and miscommunication. In this regard, a number of proposals worthy of consideration have included confidence-building measures on the land and sea elimination of certain types of weapons, restraint in armaments acquisition, transparency in international arms transfer and deployment limitations for external Powers in strategically important areas.

As regards disarmament machinery, my delegation continues to hope for an end to the protracted lack of agreement on a programme of work at the Conference on Disarmament. The unprecedented cross-group initiative of its five former Presidents offers, in our view, a pragmatic approach for adopting an agenda that reflects the priority concerns of all Member States. This has become all the more imperative against the backdrop of a rapidly changing international security environment and hence, widespread concern about the potential consequences of continued immobility in that forum.

The resumption of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament at this critical juncture will mark a turning point in its history, and its integration will have a beneficial impact on our continuing endeavours in arms limitations and disarmament. Indonesia remains optimistic that, at its next session, from January through March, this forum will rise to its responsibility as the sole multilateral negotiating forum by fostering consensus on its programme of work.

As regards the working methods and reallocation of some agenda items of the First Committee, Indonesia, along with other members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), will continue to accord this issue the importance that it warrants within the overall process of revitalizing the General Assembly. Needless to say, such an exercise requires flexibility and cooperation on the part of all Members.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): My delegation takes the floor to address the resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.15 on enhancing the role of the First Committee. The purpose of this process is to make the First Committee more relevant. We are glad that there have been informal consultations on the subject. It is important to maintain the momentum in this process. We consider discussions on enhancing the role of the First Committee as part of the broader efforts to improve the functioning of the General Assembly as called for by the Secretary-General. Our consultations must contribute to the ongoing work in the Working Group on the leadership of the President of the General Assembly. Those two tracks have to be mutually supportive. For that reason, Norway plays an active role in the General Assembly Working Group. We also think that a revitalized First Committee will have positive repercussions for our efforts to further strengthen a multilateral approach to disarmament and non-proliferation.

We welcome draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15. We also appreciate that consultations are being held on its final wording. It is our hope that the draft resolution can be adopted without a vote.

Mr. U Mya Than (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran,

Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Panama, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Tonga, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own delegation, Myanmar.

Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47 is our traditional draft resolution, which we have tabled every year since 1995. It is sponsored by all the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and many countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Although this is not a NAM draft resolution per se, it reflects the views of the overwhelming majority of the NAM countries.

Nuclear disarmament is the highest priority for us in the field of arms control and disarmament. Our vision is a world totally free of nuclear weapons. To that end, we must strive to take incremental steps for the reduction of nuclear weapons, eventually leading to their total elimination. This is reflected in the preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution.

Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are substantively linked and interrelated, as well as mutually reinforcing. The two processes must go hand in hand. Let there be no mistake: it is inconceivable to enforce nuclear non-proliferation effectively without a systematic, progressive and irreversible process of nuclear disarmament.

That point is of paramount importance. Some countries place emphasis on the aspect of nuclear non-proliferation, playing down the importance of nuclear disarmament. We note with concern such an approach by some countries at the Review Conferences and Preparatory Committee meetings of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We strongly differ with that approach. We wish to stress that there can be no effective enforcement of nuclear non-proliferation without a systematic, progressive and irreversible process of nuclear disarmament. That message is conveyed and highlighted by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47 in operative paragraph 2.

The Member States of the United Nations, with the exception of a handful of countries, are also States Parties to the NPT. Under article VI of the NPT, all States Parties have the obligation to pursue in good faith, and to bring to a conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Moreover, the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference sets out 13 steps for systematic and progressive efforts to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament. We consider that the "unequivocal undertaking" by the nuclear-weapon States — embodied in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference — to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, is of paramount importance. We also attach great importance to the 13 steps for nuclear disarmament, set out in the Final Document of the Conference. We therefore call for the full and effective implementation of the 13 steps for nuclear disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States. Those crucially important points are reflected in the seventh preambular paragraph, as well as in operative paragraphs 2, 11 and 12 of the draft resolution.

Reflecting the views of the overwhelming majority of the NAM Member States, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.47 sends a powerful message through a number of substantive paragraphs. In operative paragraph 19, it reiterates its call on the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament early in 2004. It also calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament.

The draft resolution is comprehensive in scope and encompasses crucial interim measures for reducing the nuclear danger, as well. We believe that there is a genuine need to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and security policies of Member States to minimize the risk that those weapons will ever be used and to facilitate the process of their total elimination. The nuclear-weapon States are urged, as an interim measure, to de-alert and deactivate immediately their nuclear weapons and to take other concrete measures to reduce further the operational status of their nuclear weapon systems.

Furthermore, the draft resolution calls on the nuclear-weapon States, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, to agree on an international, legally binding instrument on a joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and to conclude an internationally and legally binding instrument on security assurances of non-use and non-

threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

These crucial interim measures will go a long way in reducing the nuclear danger. We have reflected these important points in operative paragraphs 4, 6 and 8 of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47 is the most substantive draft resolution on the subject of nuclear disarmament. It promotes and underlines the importance of multilateralism in the field of arms control and disarmament. The draft resolution is, indeed, a road map for nuclear disarmament. It addresses the question of nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, in an in-depth and substantive manner.

For those reasons, I call upon the Member States to lend the draft their overwhelming support, as in previous years, and vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47.

Mr. Maandi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): The Algerian delegation would like to express its views on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament". The draft resolution was introduced by Myanmar, and my country has been a sponsor of the text since the first year it was presented.

My delegation would also like to reiterate its deep belief that security, one and indivisible, must benefit all. As far as my country is concerned, the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the top priority now more than ever before. We advocate a universal collective security system that can, once and for all, free us from military theories and doctrines concerning nuclear deterrents. The end of the cold war made this theory anachronistic and put the nuclear option in perspective. There are no grounds for still citing outdated doctrines that hamper our progress in nuclear disarmament. Unilateral and bilateral approaches to reducing nuclear weapon stocks are useful and indeed necessary, but they can never fully satisfy our demand for nuclear disarmament. The enormous difficulties facing the nuclear disarmament process and the interest and fundamental role given by security policies to nuclear weapons, is of concern to us today.

This is disturbing because it calls into question commitments made on nuclear disarmament, infringes on the principle of undiminished security for all and discriminates between nuclear and non-nuclear countries. It also concerns us because it encourages other countries to opt for nuclear weapons in order to ensure their own security on the grounds of nuclear deterrence, a philosophy which, unfortunately, still holds good today. The concept of deterrence gives rise to the development and perfection of new kinds of weapons, creates an atmosphere of distrust and further accelerates the arms race. This leads to a selective application of conventions and treaties on nuclear disarmament. Respect for article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is of legal significance and nuclear countries must comply with it.

The historic commitment made so unequivocally at the Sixth Review Conference of the NPT in 2000, under article VI of the NPT, must absolutely be implemented. To use article VI for the purpose of concluding international agreements which would promote the complete dismantling of nuclear arsenals necessarily involves the rehabilitation and relaunching of the Conference on Disarmament, which is the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. Everything must be done to make that multilateral body function again, so that in good faith and without delay, it may engage in negotiations to eliminate these particularly deadly weapons.

Nuclear disarmament cannot be reduced simply to combating horizontal nuclear proliferation. Ending nuclear proliferation in itself is not enough to strengthen international peace and security, but must include effective nuclear disarmament. Vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons has continued against the spirit and letter of the NPT and it has not been possible to stop it. However it could be stopped if we were to abandon our old reflexes and abandon the nuclear doctrine.

The draft resolution on nuclear disarmament now before us supports nuclear disarmament. It is based on a bold understanding of nuclear disarmament similar to that of the Non-Aligned Movement and calls for the international community to proceed with its first resolution on nuclear disarmament which was adopted in 1946. Apart from welcoming the positive results of the Sixth Review Conference of the NPT in 2000, particularly the commitment by nuclear-weapon States to completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals, the draft also recognizes that the conditions now exist to create a nuclear-weapon-free world. The draft considers it necessary to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in

politics and in security policies as well, in order to facilitate the elimination of such weapons.

The draft resolution proposes a number of measures, practical and relevant, to clear the way so that we may proceed towards our noble objective of banning nuclear weapons.

As far as my delegation is concerned, convening an international nuclear disarmament conference, and establishing an ad hoc committee in 2004 on nuclear disarmament, opening negotiations to draft a treaty on fissile materials and, while waiting for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, to conclude a binding legal instrument on security guarantees for non-nuclear States — all of these are proposals that can help to completely eliminate nuclear arsenals.

These measures reflect our understanding of nuclear disarmament which must free mankind from the threat of extinction and must also make available resources currently used on weapons for the purposes of economic and social development.

We support the draft resolution and we restate our firm commitment to nuclear disarmament which is the only healthy option for future generations.

Accordingly, my delegation supports the draft resolution and calls for all delegations to support it. Along the same lines, we would like to say that we fully support the draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.31 with regard to an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This was introduced by Malaysia and my country has been a sponsor of it for many years here in the First Committee. The draft resolution underscores the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there is an obligation to continue in good faith and to then complete negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control. It urges all States to immediately comply with this obligation. My delegation would appeal to all delegations to give their full support to draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.31.

Mr. Buffa (Paraguay) *(spoke in Spanish)*: My delegation supports the statement to be delivered by the delegation of Uruguay, on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) on trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The Government of the Republic of Paraguay, aware of its international obligations and convinced that the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in July 2001 by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, is an effective tool to avoid having these weapons enter the illicit arms market beyond the control of Member States. With this in mind, Paraguay appealed to the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations for technical and financial assistance in order to destroy 2,615 firearms and 80,976 kilograms of munitions of various kinds.

Destruction of this material was carried out under stipulation 18, part of the measures envisaged by our nationwide plan which obliges Member States to review, periodically, the arsenals of small arms and light weapons of their own armed forces, national police forces and other authorized bodies, to see to it that any declared surplus be clearly announced and that programmes be established and carried out for their responsible elimination.

By the same token, hand in hand with the destruction of arms and munitions, my country held a seminar on the new challenge for the Republic of Paraguay in the fight to control, prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trafficking in firearms, munitions and explosives. This seminar was aimed at the representatives of the judiciary, public ministries, the armed forces, the national police and the customs directorate, as well as all institutions involved in the implementation of law 1910/02 covering firearms, munitions and explosives.

My delegation should like to express its appreciation to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for the professionalism and efficiency the members of the mission displayed. For over a month they worked tirelessly so that events on the destruction of weapons and munitions, as well as other events developed unofficially, were carried out in transparency and with success.

We are aware that there is still a long way to go before United Nations assistance through its Regional Centre will make it possible to carry out further firearms destruction exercises, improve our approaches to stockpiling, and carry out training courses for attorneys, judges, law enforcement, civil society, and above all, to see to it that a tracking centre for firearms,

so necessary in our country and subregion, be established.

In conclusion, my delegation should like to point out that to find a lasting solution to these problems, we must act with shared responsibility, placing special emphasis on an effective control on the manufacturing and transfer of small arms.

Mr. Maandi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me to introduce in the First Committee the draft resolution entitled, "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", which is to be found in document A/C.1/58/L.42, and I do so on behalf of the following sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as Zambia and Zimbabwe, two countries that have been kind enough to lend their valuable support to our draft resolution.

This draft resolution is regularly introduced here, and it reflects our commitment to strengthening cooperation and security in the Mediterranean region. It also bears witness to our joint resolve to cooperate through constructive dialogue in establishing a genuine partnership and building a stable, peaceful and prosperous Mediterranean region for the benefit of all the peoples of the region.

This is our fundamental goal, and it derives quite legitimately from the many deep ties that have been woven over the centuries by us, for we belong to the same geographic area, and there is a strong tradition of trade among our peoples. This is also a strategic choice that responds to the concerns and legitimate hopes of the peoples on both shores of the Mediterranean. We seek to make the Mediterranean a true lake of peace and cooperation, and to make use of the enormous reserve of complementarity that exists there for the true mutual interests of all of our peoples.

The 1995 Barcelona Conference laid the foundation for a new relationship based on partnership and community of interests. It recognized the nature of Euro-Mediterranean relations and underlined the need for collective action to give true content to cooperation that can reduce development inequalities and gaps that do separate the two shores of the Mediterranean, and also establish an atmosphere of understanding and fertile and constructive dialogue between the cultures and the people of the Mediterranean.

Other frameworks for dialogue and reaching agreement, as well as various ministerial meetings have been held subsequently, and they have given a new impetus to the Euro-Mediterranean dynamics by giving it a global and balanced approach.

The draft is similar to resolution 57/99, adopted last year, and deals with a large range of issues related to strengthening security and cooperation in the Mediterranean. In the preamble, the draft recalls all of the initiatives taken by Mediterranean countries to strengthen peace, security and cooperation in the Mediterranean. It also reaffirms all States' duty to contribute to stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region, as well as their commitment to respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States.

While stressing the indivisibility of security in the Mediterranean, the draft notes that peace negotiations in the Middle East, which should be global, are an appropriate framework for the peaceful settlement of disputes in the region. In its operative part, the draft states in paragraph 2, the fundamental principles underlying efforts by Mediterranean countries to eliminate all causes of tension in the region, and resolve in a peaceful, just and lasting way, problems that do exist.

In operative paragraph 4, the draft reiterates the view that eliminating economic and social disparities relating to unequal development, promoting mutual respect and better understanding among the cultures of the Mediterranean region help to strengthen peace, security and cooperation among the countries there.

In operative paragraph 5, dealing with disarmament, the draft calls on States in the region that have not yet done so to adhere to all the legal instruments relating to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation negotiated within the multilateral context, and in paragraph operative 6, it encourages all States to

promote confidence-building measures, openness and transparency.

In operative paragraph 7, all States in the Mediterranean are encouraged to strengthen further their cooperation to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, as well as to combat organized crime, illegal arms trafficking, drug production and trafficking, all of which are a threat to peace and stability.

As in past years, the sponsors trust that this draft will be supported by all members of this Committee and that the draft can thus be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Hussin (Malaysia): It is an honour for my delegation to introduce to the Committee a draft resolution entitled, "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons," as contained in document A/C.1/58/L.31.

The draft resolution is sponsored by the following delegations, namely, Algeria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Tonga, Viet Nam and Zambia. My delegation expresses its gratitude to all the sponsors, as well as to those delegations that may decide to sponsor or support the draft resolution.

The Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 8 July 1996 remains a historic and resolute decision in the field of nuclear disarmament. The decision of the Court constitutes an authoritative legal call to rid the world of nuclear weapons. The Court's unanimous conclusion that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective control, continues to be replicated in operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution. Operative paragraph 2 underlines the obligation of all States to conduct and successfully conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. The unanimous decision is also consistent with the solemn obligation of States parties under Article VI of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The sponsors of this draft resolution consider that the decision by the ICJ must be followed up by concrete action by all Member States of the United Nations.

There is a clearly a crisis of confidence in the area of nuclear disarmament. Little progress has been achieved towards nuclear disarmament over the past year. Large stocks of nuclear weapons remain in the arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States. Furthermore, there are plans by nuclear-weapon States to build new nuclear weapons, as well as plans for their possible use in future military conflicts. The international community has also witnessed the decision by a State party to withdraw from the NPT. The lack of progress in the field of nuclear disarmament is disheartening. The sponsors felt compelled to reiterate the commitment of the international community to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the creation of a nuclear-free world, a goal we affirmed 25 years ago at the first special session on disarmament. In this connection, we call on all Member States to implement in good faith the provisions of the draft resolution upon its adoption, in accordance with the resolve expressed by our leaders at the Millennium Summit, as well as our Treaty obligations, namely to strive for the elimination of these weapons.

The challenge facing the international community in trying to realize a nuclear-weapon-free world has become more formidable than ever, requiring our full and unqualified commitment to the goals we set ourselves. The world has promulgated legal treaties banning the use, threat and production of other weapons of mass destruction. Yet, the final goal of eliminating nuclear weapons has been elusive. However, we must not falter. We must work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons but with a clear target — one that is foreseeable, realistic and attainable. We cannot allow the indefinite perpetuation of the possession of such weapons. Towards this end, therefore, nuclear disarmament must remain a high priority issue on the global agenda, and not be sidelined or marginalized. Governments must support multilateral efforts that seek to bring all countries together in a multilateral effort to create a nuclear-free world. The vitality of multilateralism and multilaterally

agreed solutions in addressing disarmament and international security issues must be preserved and strengthened.

In submitting this draft resolution for the consideration of Member States, my delegation is confident that it will continue to receive the support of a large majority of Member States. We are confident that States that support multilateral negotiations will heed the views of the overwhelming majority inside and outside this Hall and seek to join us in our collective endeavour towards the global elimination of nuclear weapons. Once again, my delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to the sponsors, as well as to delegations that will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Ms. Laohaphan (Thailand): I take the floor to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", as contained in document A/C.1/58/L.43. The draft resolution is already co-sponsored by 144 countries. The names of most of the sponsors appear on printed text. Additional sponsors, whose names do not yet appear on the printed text are: Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Monaco, Saint Lucia, Cape Verde, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Gambia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Albania, Guinea-Bissau, Chad, Belize, Rwanda, Dominica, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Samoa, Seychelles, Vanuatu, Djibouti, Ghana and Belarus. I am proud to report that a number of non-signatory States have also joined the sponsors' list, namely, Bhutan, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Tonga and Tuvalu. A number of signatory States that have not yet ratified the Convention have also co-sponsored the draft, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Haiti, Poland and Vanuatu. This high number of sponsors reflects the fact that the humanitarian objectives of the Anti-personnel Mine-Ban Convention are recognized and shared by the majority of States. My delegation would therefore like to place on record our thanks and appreciation to all the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.43.

Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.43 is based mainly on resolution 57/74 of 22 November 2002 and has been updated to reflect the result of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-personnel Mine-Ban Convention, held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 15 to 19 September 2003. The Meeting was attended by over 600 representatives of States parties and States not parties to the Convention, United Nations agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations. The Meeting, which brought the Anti-personnel Mine-Ban Convention to Asia for the first time, achieved in highlighting the serious threat of anti-personnel mines to human security and its devastating humanitarian impacts. The Meeting also helped raise awareness of the public and the leaders in the region. The results of the Meeting are cited in the tenth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, in which the General Assembly recalls the Fifth Meeting of States Parties, which committed States parties to pursue efforts, with renewed vigour, to clear mined areas, assist victims, destroy stockpiled anti-personnel mines and promote universal adherence to the Convention.

The Fifth Meeting of States Parties was convened at a critical juncture in the life of the Convention. Four years after its entry into force, the Convention has proved that multilateralism works, with 141 countries having joined the Convention, a significant increase from the 129 States parties last year when a draft resolution on this same topic was presented to the First Committee. Since the Fifth Meeting of States Parties, held in September this year, five countries have joined the Convention, namely, Serbia and Montenegro, Greece, Turkey, Sudan and Burundi. This is progress that we can take pride in and we must ensure that implementation of the Convention is pursued actively, despite various constraints. It is also noteworthy that, now, over 110 States do not possess stockpiled anti-personnel mines, including 50 States that have completed stockpile destruction. Altogether, over 31 million anti-personnel mines have been destroyed. Costa Rica was the first country to report the completion of mine clearance. Other States parties are also vigorously undertaking their obligations. A considerable amount of land has been cleared of anti-personnel mines and there has been a reduction in the number of new victims in some of the world's most mine-affected States.

Yet, while recognizing the success of the Convention, the Fifth Meeting of States Parties remained deeply concerned that anti-personnel mines continue to kill, maim, and threaten the lives of countless innocent people each day, causing human suffering and impeding development. The terror of mines prevents individuals from reclaiming their lives. The lasting impact of those weapons denies

communities the opportunity to rebuild, long after conflicts have ended. In operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly renews its call upon all States and other relevant parties to work together to promote, support and advance the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of mine victims, mine risk education programmes, and the removal of anti-personnel mines and the assurance of their destruction.

Operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution invites all States that have not signed the Convention to accede to it without delay. Operative paragraph 2 urges all States that have signed but have not ratified the Convention to ratify it without delay. Operative paragraph 3 stresses the importance of the full and effective implementation of, and compliance with, the Convention. The Fifth Meeting of States Parties also envisaged more active involvement on the part of States not parties to the Convention. States not parties to the Convention that share the humanitarian objective of the Convention can share their experiences and technology or can even assist States parties in dealing with constraints in stockpile destruction, mine clearance, and victim assistance. The Fifth Meeting of States Parties also emphasized the importance of regional efforts and initiatives to promote the universal acceptance of the Convention.

The Fifth Meeting of States Parties also decided to hold the First Review Conference of the Convention at Nairobi, Kenya, from 29 November to 3 December 2004. Operative paragraph 8 of the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General, in accordance with article 12, paragraph 1, of the Convention, to undertake the preparations necessary to convene the First Review Conference. Operative paragraph 9 requests the Secretary-General, on behalf of the States parties and in accordance with article 12, paragraph 3, of the Convention, to invite States not parties to the Convention, as well as the United Nations, other relevant international organizations or institutions, regional organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and relevant non-governmental organizations, to attend the First Review Conference as observers, and urges participation at the highest possible level in a high-level segment to be held at the end of the Review Conference.

Given the humanitarian nature of the Convention, we hope that the draft resolution will enjoy the widest support possible from States parties, as well as States not parties to the Convention. We also urge States not parties to the Convention to consider voting in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Oyugi (Kenya): I take the floor to convey my delegation's full support for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.43 on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which has just been introduced by the delegation of Thailand.

We wish to express our gratitude to the delegation of Thailand for its efforts in presenting a text of the draft resolution and mobilizing support for it. We are happy to note the growing support for this draft resolution, especially from non-signatory States. We look forward to having all of them on board the Convention at the earliest opportunity.

Anti-personnel landmines are some of the most inhuman weapons devised by man. Not only do they maim and kill innocent civilians, they also directly contribute to the perpetuation of poverty and underdevelopment in the affected regions. We therefore urge those countries that continue to produce, acquire, use, stockpile or transfer anti-personnel mines to put an early end to such activities and join the international community in eradicating those deadly weapons.

Despite the extreme suffering caused by such landmines, we are encouraged by the successful conclusion of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which was held at Bangkok from 15 to 19 September this year. Here again we are grateful to the Government of Thailand for the formative work of hosting a highly successful meeting. The Bangkok Meeting brought together most of the 141 States that have ratified the Convention and was an inspiring example of what multilateralism can achieve when the positive collective will is mobilized.

It is instructive that the Conference was attended not only by the major mine-affected countries, but also by all major advocates of mine clearance, humanitarian organizations, non-governmental organizations and victim-assistance groups.

The Fifth Meeting of States Parties was testament to the burning desire of most of the United Nations members, especially those most affected by mines, to collectively and conclusively address the landmines dilemma and implement the Ottawa Convention.

The Convention has, to date, positively tackled several mine issues. The achievements include extensive demining, in which over 30 million mines have been destroyed by States parties. Stockpile destruction deadlines have been met by many concerned parties, and massive reduction of casualties attained.

A high level of political and resource mobilization has also been achieved to ensure the completion of the task. In this connection, I am pleased to report that Kenya completed the destruction of its entire stockpile of 35,774 assorted anti-personnel mines in August, this year. This is two years ahead of our deadline for destruction. We also continue to submit our article 7 report in a timely and regular manner, as required under the Convention.

Kenya is delighted to host the First Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention, which will be held at Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December next year. My delegation attaches considerable importance to this Conference, as it will enable us to review our achievements, assess where we stand vis-à-vis the requirements of the Convention, and chart the way forward.

We therefore thank all those delegations that have already emphasized their commitment to ensuring a successful 2004 Review Conference in Nairobi, and invite all States and organizations to participate at the highest possible level. In preparation for the Conference, two preparatory committee sessions will be held in Geneva in February and June next year.

We urge all States parties, as well as other organizations and actors, to take full advantage and participate actively in these sessions. It is crucial that we all work closely and generate innovative but practical ideas for the Review Conference.

Mr. Kment (Austria): I am taking the floor to express our full support for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.43, which has just been introduced by Thailand, and we would like to thank the Thai delegation for its efforts.

Austria is a sponsor of this draft resolution and we are very pleased to note that an unprecedented high number of States have decided to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

This is a visible expression not only of the success of the Convention itself but also of the strength of the international norm against anti-personnel landmines that the Convention has established.

Anti-personnel mines are a weapon that cannot discriminate between combatants and innocent civilians. It is a weapon that causes terrible human suffering. One hundred and fifty States have acknowledged this and have outlawed the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of this terrible weapon. We strongly urge those States that have so far remained outside the Convention to change their position and to join in to the ever-growing broad consensus of the international community and to accede to the Convention. In this regard, we want to congratulate Turkey, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, Sudan and Burundi for their recent ratifications and accessions.

This Convention is, however, not only a disarmament instrument. It also provides the framework for the solution of the problems caused by anti-personnel mines. States parties have committed themselves to clear mined land, to assist victims and to destroy stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines. During the past four years, impressive progress has been made towards the implementation of these objectives. Vast areas of mined land have been cleared and returned to civilians for productive use, survivors of landmine accidents have been assisted and many millions of stockpiled mines have been destroyed. Nevertheless, anti-personnel mines continue to be used and to cause human suffering and impede post-conflict development.

A lot still needs, therefore, to be done if we want to truly solve this problem. In order to continue to make strides in universalizing the norm of the Convention, more resources need to be mobilized so that the Convention's objectives can be achieved. These resources have to be used efficiently and in a coordinated manner. Mine action needs, therefore, to be integrated into the overall development strategies of affected States, as well as into the development assistance programmes of States in a position to provide such assistance.

The highly successful Fifth Meeting of States Parties, which took place recently in Bangkok, clearly highlighted those elements as priorities for our future work. The Bangkok Conference also took important decisions regarding the First Review Conference of the Convention, and we congratulate Kenya for having

been chosen to be the host country of this important event. We would also like to thank all States parties for the trust placed in Austria by having designated Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch as President of the Convention's First Review Conference.

The President designate has recently sent out a food-for-thought paper to all States parties to the Convention, outlining a possible structure for our work in preparation of the Conference. It is important to start with this work as soon as possible, as time is of the essence. We will do our utmost to ensure that the Review Conference is successful but we will need the assistance of all concerned parties — States parties, international organizations and non-governmental organizations — in this effort. However, the success of the Conference and, indeed, of the whole Convention will be measured in the renewed commitment to solving the problem of anti-personnel mines once and for all. We can achieve this, if we continue to work in the same spirit of partnership that has so far characterized this process.

Mrs. Lundemo (Norway): My delegation takes the floor to express our strong support for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.43, introduced this morning by Thailand.

I would like to voice Norway's strong support for the Mine-Ban Convention. It is a response to an urgent humanitarian challenge. Anti-personnel mines also constitute an obstacle to development and must be addressed within that context as well.

We are very pleased with the outcome of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in Bangkok last month, and take this opportunity to congratulate Thailand on a successful and well-organized meeting.

The Meeting also started preparations for the First Review Conference, which will be held in Nairobi next year. On that occasion, it will be of utmost importance that we all renew our political and financial commitment to the Convention. It is vital to engage all stakeholders, the mine-affected and other States parties, as well as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, and other humanitarian and development actors. Norway has taken the initiative of establishing a resource mobilization contact group.

Like previous years, Norway has co-sponsored the draft resolution on the Mine-Ban Convention, and we are very happy to note the high number of sponsors this year.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): I take great pleasure in introducing the draft resolution entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context", contained in document A/C.1/58/L.18. This is, as can be seen, a new initiative and has been mooted to address multiple factors that affect peace and security.

While the United Nations Charter depicts peace and security at the global and regional levels as the primary responsibility of the international community, in practice, tensions at the regional and subregional levels constitute the main source of instability. These tensions contribute to the arms race, endangering not only international peace and security but also undermining efforts aimed at arms control and disarmament.

Consequently, the spiralling arms race, particularly in regions of tension and conflict, obstructs peaceful settlement of disputes, rendering their resolution even more difficult. The bite of poverty spreads despair and anger, which are, in turn, channelled into destructive causes.

Another reason that encouraged this delegation to table the draft resolution is the overwhelming body of evidence that clearly establishes that the initiation of such confidence-building measures in tension-filled regions has paid tangible dividends for peace. By lowering tensions through these measures and the peaceful resolution of disputes, States can devote their resources and energies to the socio-economic advancement of their people. Such an approach could also supplement efforts for arms control and disarmament, since most threats to peace and stability in the post-cold-war era arise mainly among States located in the same region or subregion.

Regional arms races are the bane of development. The acquisition of military arsenals beyond the requirements of legitimate security is a prime cause of economic debilitation. There exists a symbiotic link between conflict and underdevelopment, between war and poverty. This insidious relationship must be broken in order to put an end to the suffering of vast segments of the human race. Regional arms races must stop

through the advancement of security at the lowest level of armament.

Accordingly, a combination of political and military confidence-building measures could help in strengthening peace and security, and also encourage regions in the grip of tension to take measures aimed at arms control and disarmament.

As a result of open-ended consultations with Member States and recognizing many of their concerns, our delegation feels that the draft resolution is representative of the aspirations of a wide section of the international community. It highlights several aspects of confidence-building measures. First, States locked in territorial and other disputes should adopt such measures in order to prevent armed conflict, through bilateral, subregional or regional dialogue. Secondly, renunciation of the use or threat of use of force and reaffirmation of the Charter principles listed under Chapter VI can facilitate the pacific settlements of disputes among States. Thirdly, the development of confidence-building measures can encourage the maintenance of military balance among the regional States and discourage the acquisition, development and deployment of various new weapon systems. Fourthly, confidence-building measures are needed to strengthen peace along borders, so as to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended or accidental outbreak of hostilities, particularly, in nuclearized theatres.

The preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution reiterate the basic purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, as well as General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relating to the prevention of armed conflicts. The draft resolution recognizes the need for peaceful dialogue in regions of tension in order to avoid conflict. It welcomes the peace processes already initiated in various regions to resolve disputes through peaceful means, bilaterally or through mediation by third parties. It also recognizes that regions that have already developed confidence-building measures at the bilateral, subregional or regional levels, in the political and military fields, including arms control and disarmament, have greatly improved the climate of peace and security in their respective regions and have contributed to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of their people.

In its operative paragraphs, the draft resolution calls upon Member States to refrain from the use or threat of use of force, reaffirms the Assembly's commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes under Chapter VI of the Charter, calls upon Member States to open consultations and dialogue in regions of tension without preconditions, urges strict compliance with bilateral, regional and international arms control and disarmament agreements to which the contending States are parties, urges the maintenance of military balance in the regions of tension, and encourages the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities.

The draft resolution also requests the Secretary-General to consult States in regions of tension and ascertain their views for promoting confidence-building measures. This thought is contained in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, and I would like to explain it in a little more detail, because it has been the subject of comments from some quarters.

If read carefully, the paragraph asks the Secretary-General to consult the States of a region of tension and to open a process of consultation — not to impose anything, not to dictate anything, but merely, at an initial stage, to consult with the concerned Member States. The second step is to ascertain their views and find out what their thinking is. If there is tension in the region, is it not the responsibility of the Secretary-General to facilitate a solution to the situation? So, it is not intended to ask the Secretary-General to dictate any action, but only to elicit the views of the countries concerned.

The third aspect is to promote consultations among the Member States. This is a Charter-given responsibility of the Secretary-General, namely, to encourage consultations and dialogue among the concerned States of any particular region. He does this with a view to exploring possibilities. Again, it is the role of a facilitator to explore further avenues and possibilities in order to strengthen efforts leading up to confidence-building measures.

So, when read carefully, it is very clear that a number of qualifiers have been built into the text of this paragraph. A balance is struck between recognizing the sovereign will of States and enabling the Secretary-General, as mandated by the Charter, to continue the quest for peace in all parts of the world. It is in this context that paragraph 7 needs to be read.

Our delegation believes that this resolution serves all regions of tension and conflict by encouraging them to address their disputes in a peaceful manner and avert the spectre of war and destruction. As I said earlier, we have had open-ended consultations on this draft. We intend to continue these consultations, reflecting a very earnest desire to take on board, even at this stage, all reasonable and legitimate concerns. It is the expectation of our delegation that the text will ultimately be adopted with the full consent of this Committee.

Mr. Udedibia (Nigeria): I am taking the floor on behalf of the African Group to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.12, entitled "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes".

The dumping of radioactive wastes poses a serious threat to the security and development of all States. It constitutes a serious health hazard to inhabitants of the area in which they may be found, and is bound to be profoundly harmful to the environment.

Some developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, have been victims of dumping of radioactive wastes. Until the adoption by the General Assembly, at the initiative of the African Group, of the first resolution on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste at its forty-third session in 1988, Africa had been a favourable destination for the transfer of radioactive wastes in search of territories in which to dump them.

Concerned about the serious effects of the dumping of radioactive wastes, it is the wish of the African Group that the international community, as represented at this meeting, should continue to sustain this draft resolution to protect States from the indiscriminate dumping of radioactive waste, which may infringe on their sovereignties.

The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union, had in 1988, and again in 1989, adopted resolutions concerning the dumping of nuclear and industrial waste in Africa. Since then, the international community has consistently recognized the need to address the issue of radioactive wastes. This is particularly the case for the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has responsibility for nuclear and radioactive matters.

On 21 September 1990, the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, at its thirty-fourth regular session, adopted a resolution establishing a Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste. Eleven years later, on 21 September 2001, the General Conference, at its forty-fifth regular session, adopted a resolution inviting States that engage in the shipment of radioactive materials to provide assurances, as appropriate, to concerned States upon their request that the national regulations of the shipping State take into account the Agency's transport regulations and to provide the concerned States with relevant information relating to shipment of such materials. That information should indicate in all cases that the shipment is in full compliance with the required measures of physical security and safety.

On 5 September 1997, in Vienna, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was adopted as recommended by participants at the 1996 Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security.

In the draft resolution being introduced, the General Assembly calls upon all States to take appropriate measures with a view to preventing any dumping of nuclear or radioactive wastes that would infringe upon the sovereignty of States. It expresses grave concern regarding any use of nuclear wastes that might constitute radiological warfare and have grave implications for the national security of all States. The draft resolution also requests the Conference on Disarmament to intensify efforts towards the early conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons, with radioactive waste as part of this convention. The General Assembly would take note of the adoption by members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers in 1991 of the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa.

The draft resolution expresses the hope that effective implementation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste will enhance the protection of all States from the dumping of radioactive waste on their territories.

Finally, the draft resolution appeals to all Member States that have not yet taken the necessary steps to

become party to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management to do so as soon as possible.

With the exception of technical updates, the elements of the draft resolution are the same as the one adopted at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The draft resolution has always been adopted without a vote by the First Committee and by the General Assembly. The African Group would, therefore, appreciate the cooperation of all delegations in adopting this draft resolution without a vote again at this session.

Mr. Heinsberg (Germany): My delegation would like to return to the draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament, draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.5, which was introduced yesterday.

My delegation would like to thank the Japanese presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Inoguchi, for introducing that forward-looking resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament. At the same time, I have to express the deep disappointment and concern of Germany about the current state of affairs within the Conference on Disarmament. Germany deeply deplores the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, which has brought the fruitful work of this global forum, which has the negotiating mandate for disarmament and arms control, to a halt. We are convinced that the new threats to peace and security require that this unacceptable standstill of the Conference on Disarmament be overcome without delay. There are no easy excuses.

Those maintaining linkages between different subjects on the agenda, or refusing to enter into an open dialogue on all subjects of the agenda, are not living up to their responsibility and will have to bear the blame for blocking useful work. One-sided approaches, with some members of the Conference on Disarmament only pursuing their own hobbyhorses and pointedly refusing to consider other concerns raised, are no longer tolerable. This is not effective multilateralism, but myopia. Germany is committed to reaching consensus on a programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament and is ready to begin substantive work from the outset at the first session in 2004. We hope that, in light of recent movement in the Conference on Disarmament, it will be possible to take up substantive work early next year, and we sincerely hope that the draft resolution, which "stresses the urgent substantive need for the Conference to commence work on its agreed agenda items at this juncture", will be taken literally by the member States of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Caughley (New Zealand): We welcome the efforts by Canada to initiate a debate on verification in disarmament and, as a strong supporter of the biennial Canadian draft resolution entitled: "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", would like to offer a few thoughts on that topic.

In the current, highly unsettled security environment, there is a greater need than ever before for effective and robust verification mechanisms. While there is not yet consensus on the way forward for strengthening verification mechanisms and ensuring full compliance, we, nonetheless, welcome this debate as an opportunity to explore what is at stake for the international community. An argument raised against the establishment of verification mechanisms is that rapidly evolving technology means it would be impossible for any one mechanism to keep abreast of all new threats. We accept the point that threats from chemical and biological weapons are not static and will continue to evolve, but that is an argument that cuts both ways. While new threats may be emerging, verification technology is always being updated and improved.

The advancement of new threats is not a reason for discarding multilateral mechanisms. Instead, we believe that that is a reason for urgently renewing the international community's commitment to verification regimes. In the face of new threats, it is surely preferable to have States working together to support verification mechanisms. Not all States have the resources to monitor compliance issues. International institutions that can be constantly focused on this task add a further layer of protection.

Another argument that has been advanced against multilateral mechanisms is that the security of States is a sensitive issue and bringing such issues into multilateral forums can only alert potential proliferators who are non-State actors to potential gaps in defence regimes. In responding to this argument, we need to face the reality that information is now easier to access and exchange. Alerting States to potential

problems and ensuring that we have effective institutions in place to monitor adverse developments is a constructive and effective avenue for addressing those threats. In addition, we recognize that there can be shades of opinion on the objectivity of any independent body in this area. No one institution is going to be flawless and, hence, States must continuously scrutinize the work of such bodies and hold them to account for their findings. But this is part and parcel of mustering all of the multilateral tools at our disposal to counteract the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

We also acknowledge that establishing institutions that are responsible for verification can be costly and time-consuming. However, when international security is at stake, it is in all of our interests to ensure such institutions are sufficiently well resourced. We also note in this regard the professional work carried out by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) in Iraq, despite limited resources.

New Zealand strongly supports the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This is an example of an institution, that all of its member States rely on to provide thorough and independent assurances that nuclear materials are being used properly and safely in accordance with international commitments. We especially appreciate the efforts of the Agency to undertake regular reviews of procedure, with a view to increasing the efficiency and accuracy of the organization.

Any verification mechanism will only be as strong as the will of the international community supporting it. That is the reason why in our general statement we called on States to fully cooperate with the relevant institutions in resolving compliance concerns, and on States to allow the process of inspection and deliberation to run their full course. We strongly support the sixteen principles of verification and underline principle 2, that verification is not an aim in itself. Real security against weapons of mass destruction requires all States and individuals to vigorously enforce the treaties, rules, laws and procedures that have been established to outlaw proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Mr. Fraser (Canada): I would like to take the floor briefly to address a theme of profound importance to Canada, that of disarmament education.

At its fifty-seventh session one year ago, this Committee adopted by consensus a biennial resolution entitled "United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education" (A/C.1/57/L.7). The resolution reaffirmed the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and the commitment of Member States to take concrete steps in order to strengthen that role. It welcomed the United Nations study prepared by the Secretary-General with the assistance of governmental experts and agreed that the need has never been greater for disarmament and non-proliferation education. It also recognized the importance of the role of civil society in the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education.

Canada was pleased to sponsor that consensus resolution and I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Committee on steps Canada has taken to support its implementation. My Government has long recognized the value — indeed the indispensable contribution — of research and education in areas of international security. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's International Security Research and Outreach Programme (ISROP) constitutes a focal point for original research and assessment relevant to international security issues, including non-proliferation; arms control and disarmament; verification and confidence-building measures. The Programme draws together in-house research capability, resources from other Government departments and a network of expertise from the academic community and other knowledgeable individuals in Canada and abroad. ISROP provides up-to-date, objective information and encourages the exchange of views on international security matters through web-based and other publications accessible to the public. Long-time First Committee participants will undoubtedly recall the numerous ISROP publications that Canada has made available on a variety of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament issues over the last 15 or more years.

This past August, ISROP was proud to launch the Graduate Research Awards for Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, in partnership with The Simons Centre for Peace and Disarmament Studies at the University of British Columbia. The primary objective of the Awards is to enhance Canadian

graduate-level scholarship on non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament issues. They signal the importance Canada attaches to the contribution of academia and civil society in developing centres of knowledge and expertise that can contribute to our disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Details about the Graduate Research Awards, as well as ISROP, are available for interested delegations.

My Government is also in the process of finalizing its contribution towards an ambitious project, in partnership with the United Nations Association of Canada (UNAC). We are hopeful that UNAC will soon launch a comprehensive disarmament education programme intended for students and teachers at the secondary school level across Canada. That project holds great promise and goes far to capture the spirit at the core of the Secretary-General's report. It promotes the establishment of close collaboration between non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament experts and civil society, including educators and academic institutions at the secondary and tertiary levels of education. We look forward to returning to this important theme at next year's First Committee session.

Mr. Adji (Indonesia): I am taking the floor to express my delegation's strong support for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", sponsored by Myanmar.

To the concern of many Member States, the discussion of nuclear disarmament in the First Committee has this year, like last year, been steered increasingly towards an emphasis on non-proliferation and nuclear terrorism and has effectively overshadowed the objective of nuclear disarmament, particularly with respect to compliance with existing treaties. In the Final Document of the Thirteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), held in Kuala Lumpur, my delegation, along with other NAM delegations, reiterated once again our principle positions on nuclear disarmament and the related issue of nuclear non-proliferation.

We are concerned over the lack of progress and underscore the need to achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament through the commencement of deliberations and negotiations without delay in the relevant disarmament bodies, such as the First Committee, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. Furthermore, we consider the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States, as well as the States with nuclear-weapon capability, to be a continued threat to the security and survival of humanity. My delegation has therefore joined with a number of the other delegations of Non-Aligned Movement countries in sponsoring the draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, which was recently introduced by Myanmar.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to make a brief statement on two items on the agenda of the fifty-eighth session: agenda item 70, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", and item 76, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

The Russian Federation is seriously concerned at the alarming turn of events in the Middle East. Mounting tension in the region is seriously harming all parties to the conflict and efforts at a Middle East settlement. It is our view that to ensure stability in the region we must have a comprehensive approach. In that context, we support the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the area of the Middle East. We also take the view that adoption of that proposal will contribute to ensuring the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and contribute to Israel's becoming a party to it.

On the whole, we believe that the international community must act more forcefully to prevent the worst-case scenario from being realized, while also taking practical steps to further a process designed to bring about a peaceful settlement. We consider the most urgent and important task at hand to be the earliest possible implementation of the road map elaborated by the Quartet and its adoption by both sides. In accordance with that view, at a ministerial-level meeting of the Quartet in New York held on 26 September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Ivanov, presented an initiative for the adoption of a special Security Council resolution endorsing the road map. We intend to carry out that initiative in the very near future.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the member States of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay, as well as the associated countries of Bolivia and Chile, to address the Convention on the Prohibition

of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

As to the first, the Chemical Weapons Convention, this instrument is one of the fundamental pillars in the struggle against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The commitment of MERCOSUR and its associated countries was demonstrated by their ratification of the Convention, and I am gratified to say that in our subregion there are no weapons of mass destruction of any kind. The ultimate aim of the Chemical Weapons Convention is not only the permanent elimination of such weapons, their stockpiles and facilities, but also the control of such weapons through inspection and verification of chemical activities carried out by States parties, including those involving substances and precursors that might help directly or indirectly in the development of chemical weapons. Moreover, at a time when the international community is threatened by a type of terrorism that appears to be determined to use weapons of mass destruction in order to sow hatred and destruction, that objective is of particular importance.

Five years after the entry into force of this Convention, it is important to point out the progress in its implementation as a result of the international efforts undertaken by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the States parties to the Convention.

We hope that in the near future a total elimination of chemical weapons can be achieved through destruction of existing arsenals, recycling of related facilities and the implementation of measures by States to strengthen their policies of non-proliferation.

We should like to highlight as well the relevant role of the Organization in achieving gradually the incorporation of new States into the Convention; however, this process will also require the political will of the international community in attaining the universality of this instrument, a goal which must be pursued.

Furthermore, in order to achieve real effectiveness, it is necessary to follow up on the process of implementation of the Convention by States, in particular, the adoption of domestic legislation and the creation of punitive legislation that may guarantee compliance with and the effectiveness of the Convention.

In this regard, we consider it essential to adapt the mechanisms necessary to strengthen the control of the transfer of chemical substances and their precursors, and to achieve better understanding and cooperation among States towards solving eventual discrepancies in their declarations.

On the other hand, we must emphasize the need for global commitment in order to obtain a policy of transparency in the chemical activities carried out by States parties that must be reflected both in their declarations as well as during the course of inspections carried out by OPCW. A regional balance is required in inspections of States parties and in the relevant responsibilities of OPCW.

We believe that it is important to point out the need to promote the approach and coordination among customs offices and authorities in order to create a collective effort undertaken by those institutions in charge of monitoring and security, to create and use the machinery for cooperation and international assistance in order to prevent the use of any prohibited substance, and to create rapid response machinery to act when faced with the abuse of such substances or when a chemical weapons attack takes place.

With regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, it is important to point out the task undertaken by the Group of Governmental Experts under the chairmanship of Ambassador Tibor Toth, during the last meeting, held in Geneva from 18 to 29 August 2003.

MERCOSUR and associated countries support the results of these meetings, which reflect the efforts of the international community to achieve control over activities involving biotechnology with a view to a future binding agreement among all States.

Bringing together the global determination to promote economic and social cooperation in scientific and technological development — bilaterally or multilaterally — and the exchange of information, material and experts in relevant fields are all fundamental needs for progress among peoples.

Furthermore, in order to achieve a better approach and cooperation among States, it is a priority to adopt measures at the national level to implement the prohibitions contained in the Convention with a view to implementing a national security and monitoring machinery to monitor micro-organisms, both pathogenic and toxigenic.

MERCOSUR and its associated member countries hope that in the near future universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons will be achieved; that States parties will observe transparency in the transfer of the peaceful use of technology without discrimination; that training programmes based upon agreements for development and application of biotechnology will be promoted; and that the creation of an international databank will be created to facilitate information exchange in the field of genetic biotechnology.

Finally, we wish to stress the importance of strengthening national and international efforts and existing machinery to supervise , detect, diagnose and combat infectious diseases that afflict human beings, plants and animals alike.

Mr. Shaw (Australia): We would like to congratulate Thailand on its successful hosting of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We were particularly pleased by the active participation of so many States parties at the Bangkok meeting and we were encouraged by the participation of a number of observers which we call on to join the Convention as soon as possible.

More still needs to be done to address the impacts of anti-personnel mines in Asia. In that context, the holding of the meeting in Asia drew the attention of all to the scale of the problem in Asia. Universalization of the Convention and mine action remain key priorities for Australia. In this regard, we welcome recent progress on universalization, noting that the Landmine Convention now has 140 State parties; we urge all States in Asia and the Pacific, in particular, that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so.

In conclusion, Australia is pleased, once again, to sponsor the First Committee resolution on this vital issue, document A/C.1/58/L.43.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to speak on the questions of disarmament machinery, complementing the very stimulating statements made about the Conference on Disarmament by various representatives, particularly the Ambassadors of Poland, Germany and Austria.

I would like to speak briefly about the situation in the Conference on Disarmament. The report of the Conference on Disarmament is likely to be adopted this year without a vote as has happened in past years. I welcome this, particularly since the draft resolution introduced by Japan on this matter has more substance in it than it has in past years.

France believes in multilateralism, and we would like the Conference on Disarmament to survive because the expertise in that forum is unique. It is the only forum where member States can negotiate on a true footing of equality. But since 1998, the Conference on Disarmament has been meeting without being able to agree as to what it should be doing.

Outside the Conference on Disarmament, the world is changing very fast, and it will not wait for the Conference on Disarmament. So should we just sit back and accept this lack of movement, this paralysis? One French philosopher some years ago said that each age is marked by an approach of collective waiting, that gives meaning to the world and that motivates men and women of good will. This applies to people and to the institutions that they set up to meet their needs. The Conference on Disarmament has done great things in the past; it should not stay outside our horizon of waiting.

And for that, we must respond to simple, but crucial questions: What are the threats we face today? What do we want in security today in 2003? How can we meet expectations?

France believes that without abandoning our traditional priorities, we should also introduce into our discussions a sense of what is topical today, thereby make the Conference on Disarmament more in touch with the true needs of the today's world. I would refer to just a few of the burning issues, including weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation, terrorism, respect for and implementation of treaties, verification, and the assessment of new types of threats. These are all topics to which the Conference on Disarmament should make a contribution of some sort in the immediate term. France is among several delegations,

representing all the groups within the Conference, that have wanted to see that happen.

We must think not only about new topics, but also about new working methods to bring them to life, allowing us to achieve concrete results to the benefit of the international community. That is the only way we will be able to perform useful work. We should not seek agreement on a programme of work merely for the pure intellectual pleasure of extracting ourselves from the intractable problems to which General De Gaulle alluded 40 years ago in connection with the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work. This is first and foremost a question of doing work that will improve international security on the ground, for it is by that measure that we will be judged.

Mr. Oyugi (Kenya): My delegation would like to support draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.1 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, introduced by the representatives of South Africa, Japan and Colombia. We thank those delegations for their work.

My delegation would also like to align itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group by the representative of Nigeria, under the item on conventional weapons.

Kenya assigns capital importance to the question of the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons and is therefore a traditional supporter of today's draft resolution. We therefore urge all delegations also to support it.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report in document A/58/138, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". Small arms have helped fuel more than 90 per cent of the largest conflicts of the last decade, killing and maiming non-combatants and often leaving destitute the most vulnerable sectors of the community, namely women, children, the infirm and the aged. The illicit arms trade — unregulated, uncontrolled and untaxed — does not augment a country's economy or raise the living standards of its people.

In Africa, the devastating effects of small arms have been most profound in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions. There, instability and competition for natural resources, among other things, have led to the multiplication of non-State actors, who in turn continue to undermine legitimate authorities in some parts of the region. The resultant conflicts and instability in its region have compelled Kenya to take decisive steps in bringing together 10 regional States collectively to address the problem. This effort gave birth to the Nairobi Declaration and its coordinated agenda for action. The Nairobi Declaration shares the basic features of the United Nations Programme of Action.

Some of the specific measures undertaken by the Government of Kenya to address the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons include the establishment of a national focal point to coordinate collective efforts towards implementing the action plan. We have also established a national steering committee to consolidate peace-building, conflict management and development, particularly amongst the local communities most affected by the proliferation of small arms along the common borders. Security sector reforms have also been undertaken better to facilitate community and police partnerships.

To further underscore its seriousness in the fight against this menace, Kenya has destroyed 8,062 assorted illicit small arms and light weapons as a demonstration of its commitment and resolve to address the problem. Kenya also participated actively in the United Nations First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in New York in July.

As a country that has suffered greatly from an influx of small arms and light weapons, Kenya remains committed to the implementation of both the United Nations Programme of Action and the Nairobi plan of action. We believe that international assistance is crucial for the implementation of both plans of action, since illicit arms trafficking intrinsically thrives on loopholes created by divergent national policies regulating arms possession and transfers. Kenya therefore wishes to request more international support for collective regional and subregional initiatives.

We would also wish to see enhanced action aimed at addressing disarmament, demobilization, reintegration of combatants, improvement of surveillance mechanisms for arms transfers and reform of the security sectors. The assistance of the Conventional Arms Branch of the Department for Disarmament Affairs would be appreciated for project

design and mobilization of resources. It is also our hope that the French-Swiss initiative on tracing and marking will be augmented by other initiatives and that the current session will see the launching of negotiations on an international instrument that would be as comprehensive as possible both in scope and in application.

Finally, my delegation would, in addition, like to express its support for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.12 on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes, introduced by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. We urge all delegations to fully support this text in order that it be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Pant (Nepal): On behalf of the Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for 2003 and of the sponsors who are traditionally members of the expanded Bureau of the Commission, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.20, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission".

This draft is the result of open-ended informal consultations among members of the Disarmament Commission. It has been prepared in a manner similar to that of previous resolutions regarding the Disarmament Commission, with appropriate changes in the text as this year's circumstances warrant. Those circumstances are well known to delegations and I will not dwell on them.

During the 2003 session, the Commission concluded its consideration of two agenda items — "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms". Accordingly, paragraph 5 reflects the fact that at present the agenda of the Commission is still open and will be decided n the course of the forthcoming organizational session and subsequent consultations, if need be.

As delegations remember, in its resolution 57/95 of 22 November 2002, the Commission decided to hold its sessions for a period not exceeding three weeks, in accordance with a 1998 decision on the rationalization of the work of the Commission. The present draft resolution, in its paragraph 6, reaffirms the normal practice of having a three-week substantive session of the Commission in 2003.

Now, allow me to say a few words about the activities of the Commission this year. As I mentioned earlier, the Commission held a three-week substantive session. The Chairpersons of the two working groups continued intensive informal consultations based on the discussions, situations and oral and written proposals and materials submitted during the previous two years of deliberations.

The Chairpersons also submitted a number of revised versions of their papers. Let me say that it is not an easy task to try to maintain the perfect balance of the differing interests and issues at the core of security concepts. Despite the inability of the Commission to reach a consensus on these important issues, I am pleased to point out to the First Committee that, during three years of deliberations, both Chairpersons met the challenge and presented papers that were considered a good basis for negotiations.

In this context, I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to both Chairpersons for their valiant efforts. I wish also to express my gratitude to delegations for their constructive spirit of cooperation. Of course it is a disappointment for all of us that, at the end of the day, it was not possible to overcome the few remaining obstacles to the successful conclusion of our work. I still hope that delegations will try to keep these issues alive and put to good use those positive elements that were attained and agreed upon. I believe I speak on behalf of all delegations when I express optimism as to the future work of the Commission during forthcoming sessions in 2004 and beyond.

Despite the inability to agree on a consensus document, the previous session has proven that, within the international disarmament community, there is a tremendous reserve of goodwill and readiness to search for common solutions to even the most difficult and intractable problems.

Before concluding my brief remarks, allow me to point out the following changes: the paragraphs dealing with the issue of further rationalization of the Commission's work were not included in the text of the proposed draft, since this subject was not addressed during the 2003 session. I hope that draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.20 will enjoy consensus support, as in the previous years.

Mr. Venkatesh (India): India has taken the floor to join other delegations who have spoken on the important subject of disarmament and non-proliferation

education. We join the delegations of Canada and New Zealand, which have made positive references to this important subject.

India believes that strengthening the societal dimensions of disarmament is an extremely important task in which academics, disarmament non-governmental organizations and activists on the ground play an extremely important part. Education brings together all these broad areas of activity.

We will have opportunity to come back to this theme next year to build on the very important and substantive recommendations that were included in the report that this Committee had an opportunity to study and adopt last year, and we join other delegations in their call to keep the focus on this important area of strengthening disarmament and non-proliferation education.

The Chairman: Is there any other delegation that wishes to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case.

We have thus concluded the second phase of the Committee's work. I would commend the Committee for the fact that all draft resolutions and draft decisions have in fact been introduced during this second phase of our work.

Programme of work

The Chairman: In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the third and last phase of our work, namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 62 to 80, will begin next week.

In this connection, I would like to draw your attention to the clustering paper contained in document A/C.1/58/CRP.3, which was made available to all delegations yesterday.

The Committee will begin its work by taking action on those draft resolutions that are contained in cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, on Monday 27 October and, time permitting, will continue to draft resolutions under clusters 2, 3 and 4.

It is my intention, with your cooperation and on the basis of past practice and precedent, to move as efficiently as possible from one cluster to another upon the completion of action on each given cluster. Nonetheless, while following this procedure, the Committee will maintain a desirable degree of flexibility.

During the decision-taking stage on each individual cluster, delegations will first have the opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions with regard to any particular cluster. Then, delegations wishing to make general statements or comments, other than explanations of votes on the draft resolutions contained in a specific cluster, will be permitted to do so.

Thereafter, delegations will be provided the opportunity to explain their positions or votes in a consolidated statement on all the draft resolutions and decisions contained in a particular cluster before the Committee proceeds to take action on them, one after another, without any interruption in between. In other words, delegations will have the chance to make explanations of their positions or votes in a consolidated fashion on all of the draft resolutions contained in the specific cluster on which action will be taken.

I intend, with your assistance and cooperation, to strictly follow this procedure in order to ensure the full and efficient utilization of the time and conference resources allocated to the Committee. This is something that I firmly believe all members of the Committee fully concur with. Consequently, I appeal to all delegations to kindly observe this procedure and to avoid any interruptions once voting on a cluster begins.

Once the Committee completes action on all draft resolutions and decisions contained in a particular cluster, those delegations wishing to explain their positions or votes after the vote will be allowed to do so. However, as with the consolidated explanations of vote before the vote, delegations are requested to provide consolidated explanations of their positions after the vote on those respective draft resolutions of the given cluster on which action was completed.

I would also like to stress that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make any statements in explanation of their votes either before or after action is taken. They will, however, be permitted to make only general statements at the beginning of the meeting on a particular cluster.

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, I strongly urge those delegations seeking recorded votes

on any particular draft resolution to kindly inform the Secretariat of their intention as early as possible, before the Committee starts taking action on any individual cluster.

Finally, concerning the deferment of action on any draft resolution, I urge all delegations to inform the Secretariat in advance, at least one day before action is taken on the draft resolution. Every effort, however, should be made to refrain from resorting to a postponement of action.

It is my intention, with the agreement of the Committee, to follow the procedure that I have just outlined during the third phase of our work.

May I take it that the Committee agrees to proceed accordingly? I hear no objection, it is so decided.

In order to efficiently utilize the remaining time and facilities allocated to the Committee, I count on the full cooperation of all delegations in order to enable the First Committee to conclude its work in a successful and constructive manner.

The draft resolutions that the Committee will act upon on Monday, 27 October, contained in cluster 1 on nuclear weapons, are as follows, and as indicated in informal paper No. 1, which has been circulated to all delegations in the course of this morning's meeting: A/C.1/58/L.2, A/C.1/58/L.4, A/C.1/58/L.6, A/C.1/58/L.8, A/C.1/58/L.12, A/C.1/58/L.14, A/C.1/58/L.22, A/C.1/58/L.34, A/C.1/58/L.36, A/C.1/58/L.38, A/C.1/58/L.49 and A/C.1/58/L.52.

We will then proceed to cluster 2, on other weapons of mass destruction, and act upon the draft resolutions: A/C.1/58/L.37 and A/C.1/58/L.41.

We will then proceed to cluster 3, "Outer space: disarmament aspects", to act upon draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.44.

Finally — of course, time permitting — we will proceed to cluster 4, on conventional weapons, and act upon draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.50.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to inform the Committee that the following countries have joined the sponsors of the following draft resolutions: A/C.1/58/L.1: Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Solomon Islands; A/C.1/58/L.8: the Solomon Islands and Viet Nam; A/C.1/58/L.12: Ecuador; A/C.1/58/L.15: the Marshall Islands and the Solomon Islands; A/C. 1/58/L.16: Bosnia and Herzegovina; A/C.1/58/L.17: the Solomon Islands; A/C.1/58/L.25: the Solomon Islands; A/C.1/58/L.31: Guyana and the Solomon Islands; A/C.1/58/L.34: Viet Nam; A/C.1/58/L.35: Ecuador and Georgia; A/C.1/58/L.36: Ecuador; A/C.1/58/L.38: Congo, Ecuador, Guyana and Viet Nam; A/C.1/58/L.39: the Solomon Islands; A/C.1/58/L.40: the Solomon Islands; A/C.1/58/L.42: Bosnia and Herzegovina; A/C.1/58/L.43: the Bahamas, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Grenada, Rwanda, Samoa, Seychelles and Vanuatu; A/C.1/58/L.45: Bosnia and Herzegovina and Timor-Leste; A/C.1/58/L.49: Serbia and Montenegro; A/C.1/58/L.50: Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Solomon Islands; A/C.1/58/L.51: Papua New Guinea; A/C.1/58/L.52: the Solomon Islands; and A/C.1/58/L.53: Ecuador, Honduras and Nepal.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.